WILMA DYKEMAN AT 86 by LINDA BEHREND

NOW & THEN

THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

Vol. 22 No. 2 CENTER FOR APPALACHIAN STUDIES AND SERVICES • EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY $8.00

CELEBRATING APPALACHIAN INSTITUTIONS

Truth, Beauty, and the Spiritual Nourishment of the Human Soul:

THE BARTER THEATRE LEGEND

By BARBARA CARLISLE

THE STORY OF THE BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

An Interview with Odessa Woolfolk

By FRED SAUCEMAN

CALVIN CORNELIUS SALE, JR., BECOMES SENATOR ROBERT BYRD

By BARBARA RASMUSSEN

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and unique culture
in one
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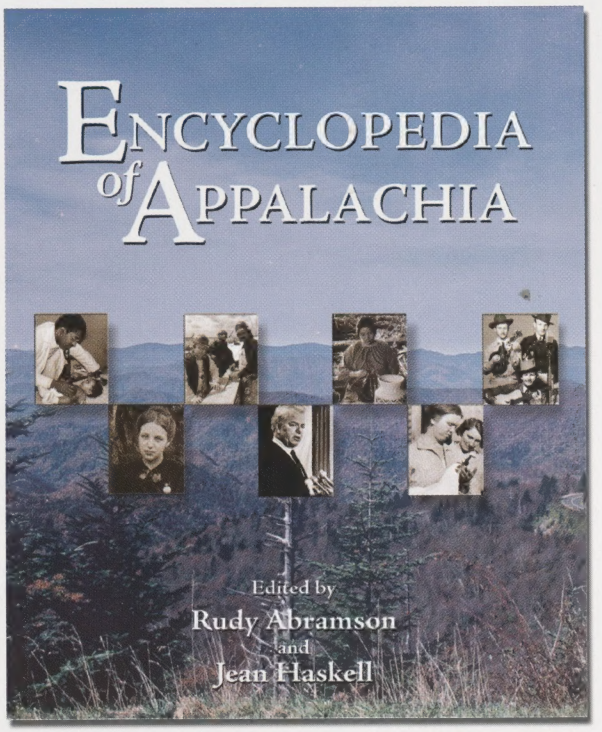

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Editor Fred Sauceman
Managing Editor Randy Sanders
Poetry Editor Linda P. Marion
Book Review Editor Marianne Worthington
Music Editor Wayne Winkler

Center for Appalachian Studies and Services Director
Roberta Herrin

NOW & THEN
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NOW & THEN
THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

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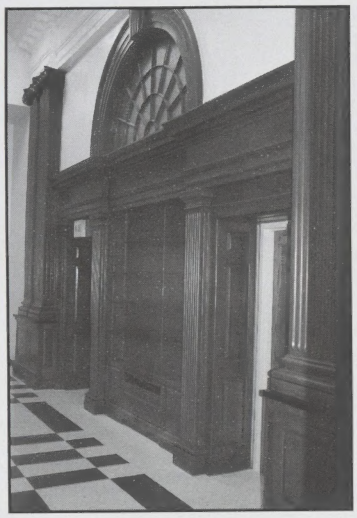
THE TENDING TO

By ROBERTA HERRIN
CENTER FOR APPALACHIAN STUDIES AND SERVICES
DIRECTOR

This past summer, we rolled up our sleeves and started packing our offices, getting ready to move from 209 Warf-Pickel Hall, which had been the "temporary" home to the center's administrative unit for seven years. The renovation of the former Sherrod Library building, vacant since 1999, was complete, and our moving date was set for July 17. We were eager to occupy our new offices in one of the campus's oldest structures, space that was originally the reading room and stacks of the 1930s library. The architect wisely preserved parts of the original woodwork, including columns, pediments, transoms, dental molding, and doors. After two decades of depressing quarters and cast-off furniture, we were moving to a new home with all the professional appurtenances.



For several weeks, we sorted through twenty-two years of files—the accumulated record of dreams, intentions, goals, hopes, failures, struggles, successes, and celebrations. Though faced with the need to sort, cull, and pack this material quickly, we could not work efficiently because each folder represented a chapter in the story of the center—handwritten flip-chart notes from an *Encyclopedia* planning meeting, pink-pad telephone messages about a Ken Murray photograph for *Now & Then*, a grant proposal for a book on country music. We puzzled at the oddities, such as a classy business card from a former Ms. Senior Tennessee; we marveled at the rarities, such as an archival photograph of Bob and Alf Taylor.

Suddenly it struck me that we were elbow-deep in the attestations of an institution—or were we? At what point does an entity such as a Center of Excellence become an institution? At what point can any organization or person lay claim to the label?

Some entities are institutions by their very nature, at least in Western cultures. Libraries, colleges and universities, hospitals, governments, marriage, churches—these have a kind of *a priori* claim to the label, a claim they have perhaps earned over centuries because they provide cultural support beams and trusses and cogs and engines and fuel. If institutions fail us, society collapses and personal chaos ensues.

Part of the original 1930s woodwork in the new center offices. Photo by Randy Sanders.

People become institutions by the influence of their integrity, character, spirit, and wisdom, characteristics that ideally have their corollaries in public institutions. These human institutions are the cornerstones for hospitals and libraries and governments, and they are keystones that lock and bind the cultural arch of institutional purpose and human need.

After all, bricks and mortar do not an institution make. A hospital exists so that physicians and nurses can tend the body; a church so that clerics can tend the soul; a library so that readers can expand the mind. Among all these are people who tend the heart and the self. And therein may lie the defining feature of an institution: the tending to, as one tends a garden or a daughter or chickens or a pot on the stove. The act of tending requires patience, dedication, purpose, caring, love.

So when can the Center of Excellence in Appalachian Studies and Services call itself an institution? Is it enough that the administrative offices now occupy impressive and elegant space in Roy S. Nicks Hall (himself an institution)? No. Elegant space without purpose is hollow. Does the center's twenty-three-year presence merit the label? No. Longevity alone is not sufficient, though longevity is necessary. Perhaps productivity is the key. Can the center lay claim to the label because the Archives of Appalachia is world-class; its Bluegrass, Old Time, and Country Music program is world-renowned; its Reece Museum is one of two accredited university museums in Tennessee; its Appalachian, Scottish, and Irish Studies program is forging bright, new partnerships; its *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* has sold more than 4,000 copies?

Last July, as we sorted files and packed boxes, I felt like a Janus figure, casting one face to the past and one to the future, tending to both. Recently, as part of the center's ongoing strategic planning initiative, we established our commitments, and we chose the word "commitments" as opposed to "values" because commitments are forward-looking; they are concomitant with the "tending to." Here they are:

To be a premier Appalachian Resource;

To honor the diverse Appalachian culture and tradition but not be bound by it;

To engage and challenge all constituents and each other on a deep level.

Whether the center is or ever will be an institution is rather a moot point, but if these commitments guide everything we do, then we will be tending our garden, tilling fertile soil for researchers, weeding through the region's past, acknowledging its flaws, encouraging its better qualities toward full bloom, and along the way, challenging ourselves to do our best work.

On a recent September morning, all the center staff posed for a photograph on the steps of our new home in a venerable old building that has been preserved and refitted for a new generation's use. I was reminded of how important it is to save what is good, to keep it safe so that it can flourish from one season to another and so that its best elements endure. And I was proud to be part of something called a Center of Excellence in Appalachian Studies and Services, made up of people who understand this importance, people who care about this region's history and commit themselves with patience and love to tending its future. And that's what any institution worth its salt is all about—tending to the future. ❖

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

By FRED SAUCEMAN

In this issue of *Now & Then*, we barn dance in Kentucky, get Crossnored in North Carolina, and jam at Ciderville in Tennessee, as we celebrate institutions in Appalachia: minor league baseball, a labor school in West Virginia, and Green Power from the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Institutions aren't just buildings and organizations. We visit author Wilma Dykeman, now eighty-six years old, and find out why she still keeps a daily journal. We learn the real reason the venerable Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia rode around Washington in a chauffeured limousine.

I sit down with the prime mover behind the Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham, Alabama, who tells me of her personal saga, a journey from segregation to reconciliation.

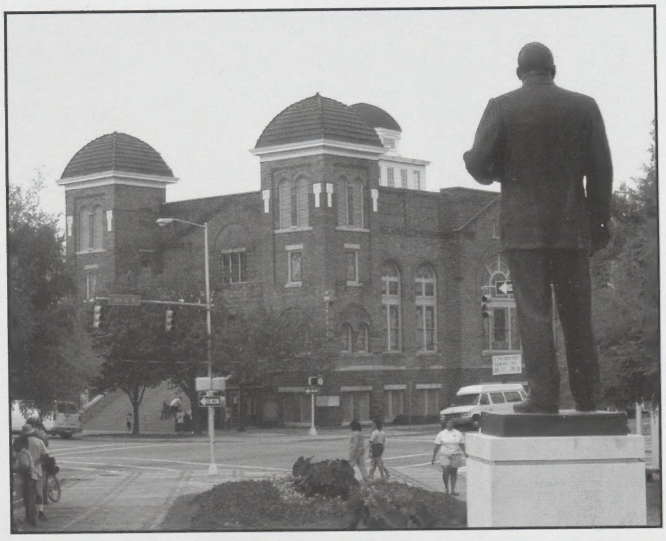
Through poetry, *Now & Then* celebrates the founder of the school free lunch program in Unicoi County, Tennessee. We make ketchup from garden-grown tomatoes and store it in Pepsi bottles. We learn that conference centers aren't a modern-day invention by visiting a century-old assembly in North Carolina.

We exchange ham for *Hamlet* at The State Theatre of Virginia and discover how it stopped emulating New York City and started embracing the artistry of Appalachia. We learn how the teachings of Gandhi and the Quakers are taking hold among middle-school-aged children in Burnsville, North Carolina. And we hear what it was like to live in the YWCA in downtown Knoxville, Tennessee, between the wars.

This issue of *Now & Then* is dedicated to Dr. Roy S. Nicks and his wife Ann. If there ever was a Tennessee higher education institution in human form, it's Dr. Nicks, Chancellor of the Tennessee Board of Regents for eleven years, President of East Tennessee State University for almost five, and student advocate for a lifetime. ❖

RECKONING

By LEMARSE WASHINGTON



My job brought me to Birmingham after I retired from the military. I was nineteen years old when the four little girls were killed in the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church on September 15, 1963. I was in Germany at the time. It's ironic that as an African American, I was defending my nation against the Cold War from the Czechoslovakian border, in a fully integrated army, and we were struggling as an African American community for equality in our own country. I was defending our country against the Communist Russian hordes when the bombing back home happened. ❖

Lemarse Washington is chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama. He spoke with the editor of *Now & Then* in the basement of the church, where Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley were killed.

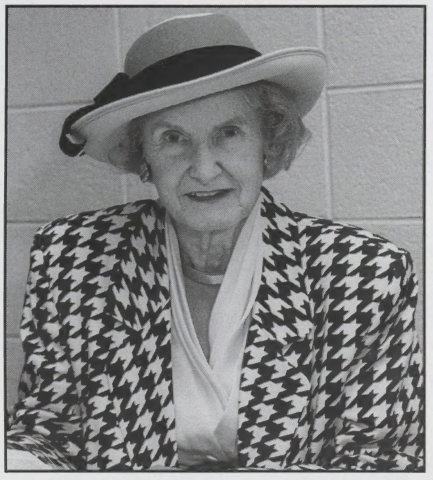
View of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church from Kelly Ingram Park, overseen by the statue of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The first church building, a brick structure, was built in 1884, and was condemned and leveled by the city in 1908. Today's church building, completed in 1911, is a modified Romanesque and Byzantine design by Wallace Rayfield, Alabama's only black architect at the time. Photo by Fred Sauceman.

WILMA DYKEMAN AT 86

By LINDA BEHREND

"Teller of stories, writer of nonfiction and fiction books, reviewer, teacher, friend of writers, she has become the first lady of Appalachia."

John Ehle, *Iron Mountain Review,* 1989



On a Sunday afternoon in December 2005, Wilma Dykeman and son Dykeman Stokely came to Carpe Librum Bookstore in Knoxville, Tennessee, where Miss Dykeman spent an hour or two signing books and talking with admirers who had come for the occasion. The bookstore's owner, who had been a neighbor of the Stokelys when she was growing up, generously laid out a number of her personal copies of early editions of Miss Dykeman's books for interested attendees to examine. Other copies of Miss Dykeman's books were for sale, demand was high, and her son ended up carrying in boxes of books from the trunk of his car to replenish the stock.

Wilma Dykeman was born May 20, 1920, in Asheville, North Carolina, and her writing career has spanned over fifty years. In 1940, shortly after graduating from Northwestern University, she married James R. Stokely, Jr., of the Stokely canning industry family. She and her husband lived for many years in the town of Newport, Tennessee, not too far from Knoxville, where they built a house, raised apples, and wrote books. A tender and poignant account of their meeting, courtship, and years together is found in her book *Explorations*. Miss Dykeman's husband died in 1977, and she is now again living in Asheville, the city where she grew up. The first indication that she was in declining health came in an interview broadcast on radio station WUOT-FM in December 2004 when the announcer mentioned that she was staying in an assisted-living facility in Asheville. "What I miss most," she said, "is being able to get out in the woods."

I visited with Miss Dykeman not long afterward, and during our time together she told me how she had written little stories and poems from the time that she

Wilma Dykeman. Photo courtesy ETSU Photo Lab.

was a child. Her father, she said, read her bedtime stories from the *Herald Tribune* each night, and she cut those stories out of the newspaper and pasted them into an old telephone directory to make her own story book. While attending Asheville-Biltmore Junior College (now The University of North Carolina at Asheville), she published poems, reviews, and a short story in *Bluets*, the student publication which she and George Smith edited. She completed her studies at Northwestern University in the department of speech and drama. In 1948 and 1951, her stories appeared in *Southwest Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *American Magazine*.

Miss Dykeman went on to publish in a variety of genres and collaborated with her husband, her sons, and others. Her first book, *The French Broad*, was published in 1955. The book itself has a story. The Stokelys were driving cross-country, reading about the various great rivers they encountered along the way, when Miss Dykeman thought about the French Broad, which begins in North Carolina near where she had grown up, flows into Tennessee, where she was then living with her family, and joins with the Holston near Knoxville to form the great Tennessee River. She felt that her own little river had a human history and natural diversity that compared with the big ones.

After querying the publishers of the "Rivers of America" series and assuring them that this would not be a book about Parisian nightlife, she submitted sample chapters. Editors were fascinated in particular by her description of the great cornfed hog drives to Charleston that took place every year along the river in the middle of the nineteenth century. They decided to take a chance on the book, which is now considered a classic and a pioneer in its use of oral history techniques. It has never gone out of print.

She continued to publish many works of non-fiction, including history, biography, and social commentary. *Neither Black nor White* (1957), a book she and her husband wrote about race relations, won the Hillman Award in 1958 for Best Book of the Year on World Peace, Race Relations, or Civil Liberties. While researching the book, the Stokelys traveled around the South talking to over 500 people—community leaders, state officials, businessmen, people working in the fields—taking notes, each writing an account of the conversations, and then synthesizing their stories. The book is seen as a valuable account of the beginning of the Civil Rights movement and led the Stokelys to report on later events in the struggle for racial equality for the *New York Times Magazine* and other publications.

Her three novels, *The Tall Woman* (1962), *The Far Family* (1966), and *Return the Innocent Earth* (1973), are significant contributions to Appalachian, American, and world literature. In *The Tall Woman* she brought to light the central roles the Southern Appalachians played in creating modern America during the Civil War and the nation's westward expansion. In the latter two novels, she showed how institutions with regional roots, such as a single family or a canning operation, can grow to national and global levels but must continue to draw on these roots in order to survive. Miss Dykeman's deep interest in the environment and in social issues informed these novels as well as the rest of her work.

In 1975 Miss Dykeman was commissioned to write *Tennessee: A Bicentennial History* for the "States of the Nation" series commemorating the American Bicentennial. In addition, for the National Park Service, she wrote histories of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Battle of Kings Mountain, the turning point in the Revolutionary War and fought mainly by soldiers from Tennessee and Virginia.

"I believe that much of the world's best literature is regional, in the largest sense of that word."

Her biographies are *Seeds of Southern Change: The Life of Will Alexander* (1962), co-authored with her husband; *Prophet of Plenty: The First Ninety Years of W. D. Weatherford* (1966); and *Too Many People, Too Little Love—Edna Rankin McKinnon: Pioneer for Birth Control* (1974). She is also author of *Tennessee Woman: An Infinite Variety* (1993). The challenge in writing biography, she told me, is to be accurate, but to keep the story interesting.

Miss Dykeman has written the text for award-winning books of photographs and published two collections of essays, *Look to This Day* (1968) and *Explorations* (1984), selected from her columns and articles in *The Knoxville News-Sentinel* newspaper from 1962 to 2000. She has also published articles and essays in *The New York Times* and contributed to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *The Encyclopedia of Tennessee History and Culture*, and numerous books and periodicals.

In addition to her writing career, Miss Dykeman has lectured widely and taught a course in Appalachian Writing at The University of Tennessee for over twenty years. She was named state historian for Tennessee in 1981 and served in that capacity until 2002.

My first recollection of Wilma Dykeman is a clipping of one of her columns from *The Knoxville News-Sentinel* that my mother sent me, probably in the 1970s. It was about *The Secret Garden* and its author, Frances Hodgson Burnett, who had lived for a time in the town of New Market in East Tennessee. I did not hear Miss Dykeman speak until 1990, when she gave an address at a joint conference of the Tennessee Library Association and the Southeastern Library Association. In her opening remarks, she said that since she had been born in North Carolina, some people might think it strange for her to be state historian for Tennessee. She went on to remind her audience, however, that some other important Tennesseans had been born in North Carolina. Namely, William Blount, James K. Polk, and Andrew Johnson.

She tells, too, about having written most of the bicentennial history of the State of Tennessee without knowing how she was going to begin the story. She finally hit upon the idea of adapting Julius Caesar's description of Gaul, resulting in: "All Tennessee, like Caesar's Gaul, is divided into three parts."

Miss Dykeman has been called a regionalist, about which she says: "Being considered a Southern, an Appalachian, a regional writer has diminished serious evaluation of my work in some circles. I believe that much of the world's best literature is regional, in the largest sense of that word. Discovering all that is unique to a place, or a person, and relating that to the universals of human experience may be old-fashioned, but I feel it is one of the challenges of writing" (*Contemporary Authors Online*).

I visited Wilma Dykeman again on a beautiful fall afternoon in September

2006. Her son drove us out to the Beaver Dam area of Asheville where she had grown up. We passed the elementary school she attended and she told me about the time she missed the bus and had to walk all the way home. She pointed out a sign for the road to Spooks Branch, saying, "I always liked that name."

We sat on the porch of her girlhood home and listened to the sound of the creek flowing by on its way to join the French Broad. "Do you know what my first words were?" she asked me. I had read the story somewhere and knew it had to do with water: "Wadie [water] comin' down," she said.

Sitting outside under a brilliant blue sky, we again talked about the importance of keeping a journal, and she told me that she would write down what we had done that day in hers. For, at eighty-six, Wilma Dykeman is still keeping a journal. ❖

Author's Note

Manuscripts and papers by and about Miss Dykeman can be found in the archives at The University of North Carolina at Asheville; The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Berea College in Kentucky (where she was the college's first woman trustee); The University of Tennessee, Knoxville; photographs at The University of North Carolina, Charlotte; and correspondence between Miss Dykeman and Martha Ragsdale Ragland in the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Radcliffe College.

Linda Behrend is a librarian at The University of Tennessee in Knoxville. In 1999, she received the Wilma Dykeman Essay Award from the Appalachian Writers Association.

Halloween

By MICHAEL McFEE

A pirate, I tripped and busted my head
on a big rock, trying to catch
my sister kissing the neighbor creep: it bled
so beautifully across the eyepatch

that every door-opening mother told me
how real it looked, then filled
my sack with bonus handfuls of good candy
until the paper bag split and spilled

the trailhead from a bittersweet fairy-tale
behind us: so the wench and I
headed back home cradling our booty, sailing
smoothly under a cool licorice sky

when Mr Green came flying up the street
in his battered gunmetal Falcon
after a night at Smoky the Bar, sour hornbleat
dying as the car missed its hard turn

into his driveway, rolling across the yard
straight into a solitary tree
which dropped its last few leaves on his hood
as if he'd come to trick or treat:

he clambered out the window, cursing,
then fell and started to pitch
fistfuls of gravel at the wreck, still hissing:
he screamed, "You son of a bitch!"

then stopped to piss all over it, and bark:
and then he stopped to black out:
and so we stopped watching and left that dark
for such brightness as filled our house.

Michael McFee's seventh collection of poetry, *Shinemaster*, was published in January 2006 by Carnegie Mellon University Press, publisher of his previous books *Earthly* (2001) and *Colander* (1996). His book of prose, *The Napkin Manuscripts: Selected Essays and an Interview*, has recently been published by the University of Tennessee Press. He teaches at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

MOUNTAIN MIRACLES:

The Crossnore School Story

By RANDY SANDERS

Originally this was to be an essay about a weaving program started in the early 1920s, but then. . . life happened. As I drove toward Avery County, North Carolina, on that bright morning in August 2006, I had a pretty good idea of the story I was going to write. But if I could have been magically transported six hours into my future, I would have wondered where I had obtained the Appalachian Kool-Aid. For that fast-forwarded future would have shown me walking through undergrowth that towered over my six-foot frame, pushed on by a woman thirty years my senior and half my age in spirit.

How I ended up in the woods with that force-of-nature woman now makes perfect sense: I had been *Crossnored*. You will not find *Crossnored* in the dictionary, but it is, as the American novelist Willa Cather once said about art, "the elusive element that is life itself." To be *Crossnored* is to be connected; to sense humanity's pulse. Crossnore is a special place, and Crossnore School, Inc., is a special story.

In 1913 two medical doctors, Eustace and Mary T. Martin Sloop, settled in the mountain community of Crossnore, North Carolina. Actually, "settled" was hardly the word for the dynamic husband-and-wife

Crossnore students and teachers, circa 1920. Photo courtesy Crossnore School.

team. With the passionate drive that underlies most creative acts, the Sloops, along with what would become a dedicated army of fellow travelers, willed Crossnore School, Inc., into being.

They did not set out to create a boarding school for children who, through no fault of their own, could no longer live at home. Nor did they arrive in Crossnore with the goal of building a hospital, dental clinic, weaving room, student cottages, or a dam. And yet, through a determined faith in the power of service, the good doctors built all of this and much more. In our time we speak of the purpose-driven life. Drs. Eustace and Mary Sloop did not need signposts to find their way into a purposeful life. Their abiding love for people, particularly children in need, and their affection for and commitment to one another took care of that.

First, though, a bit about weaving, the idea that led me to Crossnore. Before the Civil War, locally made looms and the resulting products of those looms were common to many mountain households, but with the post-war flow of factory-made goods, hand-weaving, even in more isolated areas, declined sharply. In the early 1920s Dr. Mary Sloop helped revive traditional weaving in the Crossnore community. Patterned after Fireside Industries at Berea College in Kentucky, her goal in establishing a weaving program was not so much to recapture a lost art for its own sake as it was to realize a confidence-boosting, income-producing outlet for local women. The culture of many mountain communities (and Crossnore was no exception) was that of girls who frequently married by age thirteen. In fact, in her autobiography, *Miracle in the Hills*, written with Legette Blythe, Dr. Sloop recalls that "girls considered themselves old maids if they were not married by fifteen or sixteen."

Education was and is the "giant leap" out of a cycle of poverty, but Dr. Sloop instinctively understood that there were many support steps, like confidence-building and self-sufficiency, that made an educational environment possible. In the early years, the weaving program took place in a single room on the Crossnore campus (the school had officially incorporated in 1917). By 1929, with the financial help of five Charlotte Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) chapters, the weaving program was moved into a log structure affectionately referred to as the "weaving house."

A glimpse into the fortitude of Dr. Mary Martin Sloop can be gained from a photographic image that shows her, properly dressed, purse over mid-arm, standing in the Linville River. Around her, children are gathering river rocks. When I asked Laura Laughridge, Crossnore School's director of advancement and compliance, about this photograph, she said, "That is

Eustace and Mary T. Martin Sloop. Photos courtesy Crossnore School.

Dr. Sloop at her best." The photograph represents an important piece of the historical record of what is today called the Crossnore Weavers & Gallery: A Working Museum.

As Dr. Sloop recounts in her autobiography:

"Six years we used the weaving house. And then in the fall of 1935, while Aunt Newbie and I were attending a big DAR meeting in West Virginia, we got a telegram. Neither of us will ever forget that day. We had left in the weaving building thousands of dollars' worth of finished hand-woven goods, among them twenty-five beautiful coverlets. The telegram said, WEAVING BUILDING BURNED TO THE GROUND AND EVERYTHING IN IT."

A few weeks after the fire, in a letter to the president of Berea College, Dr. Sloop mentioned the rebuilding

of the weaving house: "The children began the good work by giving part of their Saturday afternoon to getting rock out of the river. It was not what you might call warm, but they waded in bravely and carried out the rock—tons of them."

That letter was written in October. The new building was dedicated the following April. It is the same stone building that houses the newly remodeled and expanded Crossnore Weavers & Gallery: A Working Museum. To learn more about the museum, see the online gallery, and, like Mamie Eisenhower and Barbara Bush before you, become a Crossnore Weavers' customer, visit www.crossnoreschool.org/weavingroom.

Behind any institution there are layers of complexity. However, once capital campaigns, executive searches, and mission and vision statements are set aside, institutions are about people: the clients, volunteers, financial supporters, and staff who breathe their collective life force into that institution. Crossnore School is no different.

My day in Crossnore included interviews with Rachel Deal, a community resident and the niece of Dr. Eustace Sloop, and Michael J., a rising senior at the school. These face-to-face conversations were capped by

a phone interview with Freda Nicholson, a former Crossnore student.

Rachel Deal

Rachel was that force-of-nature woman who led me through the woods. She was born and raised in the Crossnore community. While she did not attend the school for at-risk children, she certainly knew and socialized with many of them. As she lovingly phrased it, there was a "blending ex-

The Weaving House, 1929. Photo courtesy Crossnore School.

Exterior of Crossnore Weavers & Gallery: A Working Museum. Photo by Randy Sanders.

perience" of community school and Crossnore School children.

"In fact," she went on to recount, "one of the students became my first boyfriend. He was crippled, and he couldn't easily get around, so people had to drive him places. My dad took on that job, and I was glad he did."

Rachel left Crossnore in 1953 for a job in Charlotte where she worked for a textile manufacturing concern. While there, she also sang with the Charlotte Opera Company—a talent I would soon, quite unexpectedly, experience. During our conversation she said, "The next time you come back (she always assumes, if you've got a lick of sense about you, that you will be back), we'll have to show you the Presbyterian church and the rock dam." I asked if she had any time later that afternoon to show me around. She did.

Work on Crossnore Presbyterian Church began in the summer of 1924. Plans were prepared by a Greensboro architect at the direction of—as one might guess—Dr. Mary Martin Sloop. Rock used in the construction of the church was hauled from the Linville River, and the church was originally lighted with electricity generated at the power plant built by Dr. Eustace Sloop on that same river, half a mile below the church. (Although the Sloops were Presbyterians, Crossnore School has never been affiliated with any particular denomination.)

Rachel and I stood quietly in that beautiful stone, chestnut, and stained glass space, just soaking it in. She broke the silence by saying, "Mr. Sanders, if you don't mind, I would like to sing you a song," and with that, launched into *Blessed Assurance*. Once again, I had been *Crossnored*.

Our trip to the rock dam was equally memorable. When was the last time you saw an octogenarian climbing over fallen pine trees? I think she would have simply kicked those trees out of the way had I not been there, but she didn't want to show off. Near the end of my time with her, she said, "When you come to Crossnore campus and when you come to this town, you will always come back. Most everyone finds it has a true feeling. You won't forget us." Truer words were never spoken.

Rachel Deal (foreground), Laura Laughridge, and Michael J.

Michael J.

Michael J., a rising senior at Crossnore School, was the featured student in the summer 2006 issue of the *Crossnore Magazine*, a school publication. It is not a matter of confidentiality that keeps me from sharing the circumstances that brought Michael to Crossnore, because he speaks openly about those circumstances. Rather, I prefer to concentrate on his strong, and, to me, inspiring sense of self. But I will say this: The next time I think I am having a bad day, I will humble myself by thinking of Michael.

In the summer of 2006, through the Junior Statesmen of America program, Michael was selected from a national pool of applicants to spend a month at Princeton University where he studied speech communication and political philosophy. As he stated in *Crossnore Magazine*, "When people don't understand something,

it blocks their point of view." Clearly, Michael puts a great deal of stock in articulating his views. And just as clearly, he is successful at it. In fact, out of all of the Princeton JSA students, he was handpicked to deliver an introductory speech to *NBC Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams.

"Each of us has a story to tell," he told me. "Everyone here has issues, and to those outside of Crossnore School, those issues brought on by our family circumstances may seem strange or foreign. But when you hear what others have gone through, you understand that we each have the power to create our own story." This, from a seventeen-year-old, who, I suspect, will create a meaningful story of his own.

Freda Nicholson

That same sense of self, a quality Crossnore School always strives to instill in its students, abounds in Ms. Nicholson. Hers was the phone interview I conducted after my visit to the campus. She spent two years at Crossnore School, in seventh grade and ninth grade. (Depending on family circumstances, it is not unusual for students to transition in and out of the school.) When asked about what Crossnore School meant to her, she said, "Crossnore showed me I could do something about my circumstances. I would move on, and make a life for myself." And so she did.

A registered nurse and mother of six, Freda was teaching part-time in the nursing program at a local university when the director of that program asked her to take a semester off to work on a human body exhibit for the soon-to-open Discovery Place in Charlotte. Discovery Place was an outgrowth of the Charlotte Nature Center where Freda volunteered, so the assignment seemed appropriate. What she was not prepared for, and what took a family meeting to decide, was an offer to become the CEO of Discovery Place. Six months before the 1981 opening, she accepted the job offer and served in that capacity until her retirement in 2001.

Crossnored

Like the proverbial pebble thrown into a pond, the Crossnore School story is one of ever-larger ripples: Freda Nicholson manifesting her love of science and respect for education into service at Discovery Place; the promise of Michael J. and his 273 schoolmates from twenty-six North Carolina counties and the ripples they will create; and that force-of-nature Rachel Deal, who serves on thirteen different committees in Avery County. Each of them shares a bond called Crossnore School.

And what about the story of Dr. Phyllis Crain, the current director of the school, and her life-affirming, recently-won battle with Stage IV cancer; or the newly-opened Miracle Grounds Coffee Shop and Bookstore; or the Crossnore connection to the notorious Jesse James through the McCanless gang; or the Western North Carolina Ben Long Fresco Trail of which Crossnore School's E.H. Sloop Chapel is a part? There are endless ways to be *Crossnored*, and I encourage you to find yours. As Rachel Deal might say, "You won't forget it." ❖

Randy Sanders is managing editor of *Now & Then: The Appalachian Magazine*.

A RENAISSANCE AMONG THE MINORS:

Ninety-Five Years of Appalachian League Baseball

By MARIE TEDESCO

In June of each year the youngest and rawest of talents signed by major league baseball teams in the annual June draft begin their professional careers in the short season rookie leagues, perhaps the Gulf Coast League, the Arizona League, the Pioneer League, or the Appalachian (Appy) League. Most of the young men are teenagers recently graduated from high school or Latinos from Mexico, Central and South America, and they all hope the rookie league stint is only the first step on a journey to a career in the majors. In the sixty-eight-game season, rookie league players showcase their talents before slim crowds in small, sometimes out-of-the-way towns. The prospective major leaguers stay in cheap hotels, eat fast food, and, in the Appalachian League, endure bus rides to and from such places as Danville, Virginia; Kingsport, Johnson City, and Elizabethton, Tennessee; Burlington, North Carolina; and Princeton, West Virginia.[1]

The Appy League teams and all rookie league and higher-classification squads in minor league baseball exist today as farm teams, or feeders, for major league clubs. That is, they are owned and operated by major league teams that use the minor leagues to develop talent. Aside from a small number of teams in an independent league, all minor league teams exist to serve the major league master. The major league team owns exclusive rights to the player for six years. During that time, a player can be retained, traded, or released. After six years with the same team, however, the player can elect to become a six-year minor league free agent if he is not on the team's forty-man roster.[2]

A venerable institution, the Appy League dates its organization as a minor league circuit to 1911. At its founding, the Appy League became a Class D team in a four-tiered system—A, B, C, and D—created by the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues, an organization founded in 1901 as the governing body for minor league teams. While A leagues drew from the most populous urban areas, D leagues drew from less populous rural or small-town locales. The Appy League teams in Johnson City, Morristown, and Knoxville, Tennessee; Bristol, Virginia; and Asheville, North Carolina, all served rural or small-town regions.[3] In rare cases major league teams purchased players from D or C leagues, but more often than not the athletes in these leagues played professional baseball in the summer and worked at other jobs in the off-season. For the individual player on the C or D league team, baseball provided a way to make money doing something he loved, and it accorded the individual prestige in the small community. Some players even spent their entire playing careers with D teams. In the early twentieth century, for instance, Dave Taylor spent his career with the Johnson City team, as did Joe "Lumber" Price. Career minor leaguer Leo "Muscle" Shoals spent the years from

The Johnson City Soldiers, 1912. Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University.

1937 through 1955 in the lower minors, including at least seven seasons in the Appalachian League.[4]

The Appalachian League experienced economic peaks and valleys that caused the league to fold and resume play a number of times. Only three years after its founding, the league disbanded in 1914, the victim of the shaky finances of member teams. Seven years later Johnson City mayor W. B. Ellison successfully led a movement to reestablish the league, which fielded six teams in 1921. Resumption of play was short-lived, however, as once again unstable finances led teams and the league to fold during the summer of 1925. Even though the 1920s was a time of prosperity in most areas of the nation, it was not overall a prosperous time in Southern Appalachia, a region that suffered from economic depression in agriculture and timber, in particular. The small towns of the region that depended on timber and agriculture suffered; the industries of the region could not spur enough growth before the beginning of the Great Depression of the 1930s.[5]

The era of the Great Depression, ironically, witnessed the resuscitation of the league. This time it was minor league official Ray Ryan who worked to return professional baseball to the southern mountains. Ryan received financial commitments from local elites to back a four-team league that debuted in 1937. Civic leaders in Johnson City, Elizabethton, and Newport, Tennessee, and Pennington Gap, Virginia, all looked to the baseball teams not only as ventures that would encourage players and fans to spend money but also as vehicles for community pride and optimism.[6]

But the league began to change as it evolved from a circuit of independent teams that afforded local athletes the chance to become diamond heroes, to one that existed only as a training ground and feeder league for major league parent teams. Team names often reflected the change. The Johnson City Soldiers became the Johnson City Cardinals in 1938; the Elizabethton team became the Red Sox and then the Cubs. The Kingsport Cherokees briefly became the Dodgers before reverting back to Cherokees for a time in the 1940s and 1950s. The shift from being independent teams supported by local businesses and patrons through a subscription system to being farm teams controlled by a parent major league team stemmed from economic and baseball realities. Local patrons found it increasingly difficult to support teams, while major league teams needed minor league feeder teams.

The architect of what came to be called the "farm system" was St. Louis Cardinals president Branch Rickey, who found that his team often was outbid by richer teams for the services of minor league players. Rickey reasoned that if St. Louis had a steady supply of players from its own minor league teams, then it could compete with the New York Giants, Brooklyn Dodgers, New York Yankees, Chicago White Sox, and other wealthy teams. In the 1920s he began to purchase minor league teams or to enter into contractual alliances with minor league clubs. Such arrangements guaranteed that the parent team would have a steady supply of players.[7] Yet the transformation of minor league ball from a system largely independent of the major league system to one essentially dominated and controlled by the majors meant that local characters like Leo "Muscle" Shoals could no longer find athletic fulfillment through long careers on the minor league level and that communities found it more difficult to bond with local heroes who played for teams for a number of years. The evolution of Rickey's farm system also meant that local elites and governments no longer had the sole responsibility for keeping their teams alive financially.[8]

While the majors were coming to control the minors and thus who played minor league ball, other forms of organized baseball existed for young working-class men who had no chance to play major league ball and who, in the Rickey farm system, perhaps would have been discouraged from playing ball. Since the 1890s, industrial league teams had provided an outlet for male workers who enjoyed athletic contests and who had learned the game of baseball as children. From the 1890s when the industrial work week declined to sixty hours, through the 1930s when de-

Early photo of Johnson City Soldiers, courtesy Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University.

pression conditions reduced the work week to forty or even thirty hours, workers had leisure time.[9] What would they do with it? The corporate magnates who controlled the factories of America wanted to control workers' off hours as well as their work time. Welfare capitalism dictated that companies provide recreation for workers in order to keep them busy and out of the clutches of unions. Sponsoring teams and leagues also were good ploys to ensure worker loyalty to the company—or, from a leftist perspective, to keep workers oppressed by taking their minds off their low wages and poor working conditions.[10]

Of all team sports, baseball was the most popular among industrial workers, both in the North and South. In the North such large corporations as Carnegie Steel (and its successor U.S. Steel), Wagner Electric, and Bigelow Carpet all sponsored baseball teams. In the South it was the textile mills that took the lead in sponsoring teams. Virginia's Dan River Mills had ball teams, as did the many cotton mills in the Piedmont region of North Carolina, and teams were fielded throughout South Carolina.[11] In East Tennessee American Bemberg and North American Rayon, the two rayon factories located in Elizabethton, sponsored a number of teams that played one another into the 1960s.[12]

The textile league teams of the South were segregated, as were minor league teams, North and South, at least since the 1880s and 1890s. African Americans—employed only as janitors or outside workers in southern cotton mills—played on blacks-only textile teams.[13]

Integration of minor league teams in the South followed (though not immediately) the Brooklyn Dodgers' signing of Jackie Robinson to a pro contract in 1946 and the team's playing to large crowds on spring exhibition barn-storming tours in southern cities in the late forties and early fifties. Southern minor league cities began to integrate in 1951 with brief appearances of black players in Texas, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia.[14] The Appalachian League's first African American player was Rufus Hatten, a catcher and outfielder who came to bat on a broiling hot day in Bluefield, West Virginia, for the local Blue-Grays against the Kingsport Cherokees on July 27, 1952. Hatten's Appy League career was short-lived: ten games, thirty-four times at bat, seven hits, and a .206 average. The 1952 season was his only one in the Appy League and his last in an apparently brief two-year minor league career that saw him play part of the 1951 and 1952 seasons for the Dodgers' Pueblo team in the Single-A Western League.[15] Slowly, from the early 1950s, the minors—including the Appalachian League—accepted larger numbers of black players as the Negro Leagues declined and as major league teams made signing black players commonplace.[16]

The Johnson City Cardinals, 2006.
Photo courtesy Johnson City Cardinals.

The Appalachian League and other minor leagues initially shared in the immediate post-World War II prosperity. But prosperity for the minors was transitory, as Americans turned to the television and other leisure activities for entertainment. The Appy League was in such financial straits that it folded in 1956, to return the next year as a short-season, seventy-game league. The minors overall continued to struggle into the early 1960s, even though major league teams had begun to subsidize their farm teams in 1956. The majors, trying to stem the tide of minor league teams folding, reorganized minor league baseball in 1962. The Player Development Plan eliminated the old A, B, C, and D categorization of teams and replaced it with the AAA, AA, A, Rookie League, and Instructional League setup. Under the new arrangement, each major league team agreed to finance five of its farm teams, including the subsidization of players' and team officials' salaries, equipment, and field maintenance.[17] The 1962 system remained in effect essentially until 2002 when the minors and majors agreed to divide the rookie leagues into rookie and advanced rookie. The Appy League then became an advanced rookie league.[18]

In recent decades minor league baseball overall has witnessed a renaissance, in part because major league games have become expensive for families to attend, and in part because the 1991 facilities agreement between major league baseball and the minors

that established requirements for minor league stadia and fields resulted in an upgrading of old facilities. Many communities realized they could attract the leisure dollar of residents by publicizing their new or upgraded ballparks and the affordability of attending minor league games. Promotional events also attracted fans. In 2005 over forty-one million fans attended minor league games; in 2006 the Appalachian League attracted 322,140 fans. The highest average attendance per game was 1,518 at Greeneville; the lowest was 667 at Bristol.[19]

The Appy League and other minor leagues have been influenced by and been part of social and economic trends of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Economic prosperity and depression, industrial development, increases in leisure time for workers, changes in recreational and leisure activities for middle- and working-class folks, and racial segregation and integration, all have had an impact on the minors and on opportunities for social and economic advancement afforded by participation in sport. In turn, minor league teams' interactions with communities and individuals have influenced lives.

The minors, even the lowest classification rookie leagues, have become part of both the Internet and sports marketing revolutions. The Appalachian League website provides statistics on Appy League players and games; promotional and news articles; and links to each team in the league. Fans can listen to live audio broadcasts of their favorite Appy League teams, and they can purchase Appy League caps, shirts, and memorabilia. Marketing and merchandising are as much a part of the Appy League today as potluck subscription dinners were a part of the league in the early twentieth century. ❖

Endnotes

1. For up-to-date information on current Appalachian League teams, consult the minor league baseball website: http://www.minorleaguebaseball.com. Individual teams also have websites. An Appalachian League site found under http://www.appalachianleague.com has not been updated since June 2005. Other privately developed sites also contain information on the Appalachian League. At present the Appalachian League consists of ten teams divided into East and West divisions. In the East are: the Danville (Virginia) Braves; the Pulaski (Virginia) Blue Jays; the Burlington (North Carolina) Royals (through the 2006 season the affiliation was with the Cleveland Indians); the Bluefield (West Virginia) Orioles; and the Princeton (West Virginia) Devil Rays. In the West are five Tennessee teams: the Elizabethton Twins; the Greeneville Astros; the Kingsport Mets; the Bristol Sox; and the Johnson City Cardinals. ■2. Reference to minor league free agency can be found in "Ninth President (1988-1991)," an article on minor league president Sal Artiaga, at http://www.minorleaguebaseball.com. ■3. For information on the founding of the NAPBL and the classification of leagues, see the following: Francis C. Richter, *History and Records of Base Ball: The American Nation's Chief Sport* (Philadelphia: Francis C. Richter, 1914), 156-59; John B. Foster, comp.& ed., *A History of the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues* (Columbus, Ohio: NAPBL, 1926), 17-61; and Robert Obojski, *Bush League: A History of Minor League Baseball* (New York: MacMillan, 1975), 14-16. As of 1999, the minor league organization became known simply as Minor League Baseball or MiLB. ■4. *Appalachian League Record Book, 50th Anniversary Edition 1937-1987* provides Appy League statistics for Shoals' career. The biographical entry on http://www.baseball-reference.com contains statistics for Shoals' entire minor league career. ■5. Marie Tedesco, "Appalachia Becomes Mainstream: From Down-Home Baseball to the Rookie League in Johnson City, Tennessee," *Journal of East Tennessee History*, 64 (1992): 33-34. ■6. Ibid., 35. A series of articles in the *Johnson City Press* and the *Johnson City Chronicle* detailed Ryan's efforts to bring back the Appy League. ■7. David Q. Voigt, *Baseball: An Illustrated History* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987), 100-01; and Jules Tygiel, *Past Time: Baseball as History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 91-92. ■8. Neil J. Sullivan is one who bemoans the passing of the independence of minor league teams. See his chapter on Rickey's invention of the farm system in *The Minors: The Struggles and Triumphs of Baseball's Poor Relations From 1987 to the Present* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 93-114. ■9. Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The People's Game* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 213-14; and Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns, *Baseball: An Illustrated History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 124-25. ■10. Seminal works on welfare capitalism, that is, the social, recreational, health, and insurance programs inaugurated by corporations to keep workers away from trade unions, include Stuart Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism, 1880-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); David Brody, "The Rise and Decline of Welfare Capitalism," in *Workers in Industrial America: Essays on the Twentieth Century Struggle*, 2nd. Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 48-81; H. M. Gitelman, "Welfare Capitalism Reconsidered," *Labor History*, 33 (Winter 1992): 5-31; and Abraham Epstein, "Industrial Welfare Movement Sapping American Trade Unions," *Current History*, (July 1926): 516-22. A. B. Magil, writing in the *Daily Worker*, claimed baseball was a weapon used by the bosses to keep workers oppressed: "Baseball as a Weapon Against Workers," August 24, 1929, p. 4; and August 26, 1929, p. 3. Magil discussed the article "Baseball as a Cure for Industrial Unrest," written in *Baseball Magazine* in August 1929 by William McNulty to substantiate his claims. More recently, Dave Zirin in *What's My Name, Fool: Sports and Resistance in the United States* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005), acknowledges that factory owners often used sport as a form of labor management (p.18). Writing from less critical perspectives, journalists—among them muckraker Ida Tarbell—acknowledged the importance of sports to factory workers of the early twentieth century. See, *Baseball: The People's Game*, 216-24; and articles in such journals as *Industrial Management, Journal of Applied Psychology, Recreation*, and *Outlook*. ■11. Seymour, *Baseball: The People's Game*, 224; Harriet Herring, *Welfare Work in Mill Villages: The Story of Extra-Mill Activities in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1929), 135-37; Thomas K. Perry, *Textile League Baseball: South Carolina's Mill Teams, 1880-1955* (Jefferson, North Carolina: MacFarland, 1993), 7-8; 15-17; and Jacquelyn Dowd Hall et al, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 135-36, 139. ■12. The *Elizabethton Star* carried articles on the rayon plant teams, as did plant publication *The Watauga Spinnerette*. Other area newspapers, among them the *Kingsport Times-News* and the *Johnson City Chronicle*, carried articles about the rayon plant teams when they played area industrial league teams. ■13. Perry, *Textile League Baseball*, 61-67; Seymour, *Baseball, The People's Game*, 548; and David W. Zang, *Fleet Walker's Divided Heart: The Life of Baseball's First Black Major Leaguer* (Lincoln, Nebraska, and London, England: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 39-47. ■14. Bruce Adelson, *Brushing Back Jim Crow: The Integration of Minor-League Baseball in the American South* (Charlottesville, Virginia, and London, England: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 35-37. ■15. Tom Burns, *Appy League Logbook, Entry No. 62, Rufus Hatten*, fax of transcript, p. 361. ■16. The decline of the Negro Leagues, especially in the wake of Robinson's signing for and playing with the Dodgers, is discussed in a number of sources. Chapter 18, "Let Nature Take Its Course," of Mark Ribowsky, *A Complete History of the Negro Leagues, 1884-1955* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1995), 254-72, focuses on the decline of the Negro Leagues. ■17. Tedesco, "Appalachia Becomes Mainstream," 38. ■18. *The Sporting News Baseball Guide, 2006* (St. Louis, Missouri: *The Sporting News*) divides the rookie leagues into advanced rookie and rookie and places the Appalachian League and the Pioneer League into the advanced category, and the Arizona League and the Gulf Coast League into the rookie category. The minor league baseball website does not make a distinction between advanced rookie and rookie leagues. ■19. For MiLB 2005 attendance see the MiLB website, http://www.minorleague.com; for Appy League attendance, see the league link on the MiLB site, then go to "stats" and then "attendance." Even though Appy League attendance topped 300,000, note that average crowds were slim, with six of the ten teams averaging below 1,000 fans per game.

Dr. Marie Tedesco is director of the master of arts program in liberal studies at East Tennessee State University, where she also teaches courses in History.

FIVE TIMELY PRINCIPLES SURVIVE A CENTURY:

The YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly at 100

By SARAH THOMAS

Sometimes it takes looking at things from a new perspective to realize a dream. In 1906, when Dr. Willis Weatherford climbed a tree and looked out over the expansive mountain landscape of Black Mountain, North Carolina, he knew his dream was about to become a reality. He was so excited, he shouted, "Eureka! We have found it!"

What he and Dr. A. L. Phillips, a member of the Missionary Education Movement, had found was the location for a conference facility where people could come together to meet in the midst of God's grand creation. One hundred years and more than a million conferences and meetings later, YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly celebrated its centennial with events throughout 2006.

C. Roger Hibbard, YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly director, is thrilled with how well the celebration has gone. "We've just had more fun with this and I couldn't be happier," he said. "You don't get many chances to celebrate one hundred years."

Carmaleta Monteith chaired the centennial task force. An American Indian, she has served YMCA Blue Ridge on the board of directors and now the board of trustees since 1996. Throughout that time, she has been a member of the Programs Task Force, so when it came time to plan a program worthy of one hundred years of accomplishment, Monteith was the natural choice.

Early in the summer of 2006, the celebration kicked off with a picnic at Weatherford's home, still located on the property and now occupied by his daughter-in-law Anne Weatherford. The last weekend in June, a staff and alumni reunion brought hundreds out to relive the

Lee Hall. Photo courtesy Melissa Logan, YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly.

time they spent at Blue Ridge. On July 19, a two-day Summer Celebration culminated in a traditional camp meeting.

Former Blue Ridge director Scottie Washburn has been asking those involved with the facility over the years to add their thoughts and reflections to a memory book. The Black Mountain Center for the Arts has taken that book and written *Way Back When*, a play about the assembly.

Hibbard credits the success, not only of the centennial, but also of the facility in general, to remaining true to Weatherford's original vision. "He had a vision for a place where young people could be trained in Christian leadership skills. He wanted to assure himself that the place had inspirational beauty—he felt that was very important for young people. If we've had success, it's because we've held true."

Weatherford ensured that coming generations would understand his vision by outlining five principles that are still adhered to today:

There is dignity in labor.

Religion must be intellectually respectable.

Religion is indispensable to building a life value system.

Every person is made in the image of God and is worthy of love and respect.

It's important that people reflect upon God's creation through meditation, study or other pursuits.

Melissa Logan, guest services director, commented on how well those five principles have held up over the last hundred years. "It's amazing to me that he thought of these one hundred years ago—they're timeless."

Hibbard added that staff members ask every group visiting Blue Ridge for an opportunity to outline Weatherford's principles. "Any time you're able to share a man's vision and the reality of that vision, it takes on another level of meaning."

Weatherford's journey to founding the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly began on the Texas frontier. Although his parents were natives of the Southern Appalachian Mountains, Weatherford knew only the wild, lonely stretches of the west following his birth near Weatherford, Texas—a town named for his uncle—on December 1, 1875. He began life with his parents and five brothers and sisters in a two-room log house on a twenty-acre farm just outside town.

Weatherford was no stranger to hard work. Wilma Dykeman's book *Prophet of Plenty: The First Ninety Years of W. D. Weatherford* describes how, at the age of six, he began work in his father's fields, growing crops including corn, cotton, and watermelon. By the time Weatherford was thirteen, his father decided to trade the farm for a store in town. Weatherford then took over the less strenuous job of cashier.

In spite of Weatherford's rural upbringing, his mother was determined that he receive a good education. She taught him at home until he was seven, then sent him to the local school. In 1890, Weatherford entered Weatherford College, a local school combining high-school and junior-college courses. After earning his B.S. degree, he spent two years teaching nearby. Seven years after beginning his higher education, he entered Vanderbilt University where he earned a B.A. in 1899 before opting to continue on in pursuit of a Ph.D. in literature.

All through his college career, Weatherford was involved in the Young Men's Christian Association, an organization

Dr. Willis Weatherford. Photo courtesy Melissa Logan, YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly.

founded in London by George Williams, a sales assistant in a draper's shop. The YMCA was founded in response to unhealthy social conditions in cities at the end of the Industrial Revolution. The intent was to substitute Bible study and prayer for life on the streets. The first American YMCA chapter was established in Boston in 1851.

Raised in the Methodist church, Weatherford became a member of Weatherford College's YMCA chapter. At Vanderbilt, he served as president of the school's chapter for two years. So it wasn't a surprise when he was sought out to fill the position of International YMCA Student Secretary for the Colleges of the South and Southwest after he completed his doctorate in 1902. His job included overseeing 200 chapters in fourteen states, requiring him to visit more than seventy-five schools a year.

It was during Weatherford's time with the YMCA that he became determined to find a permanent location for the organization's summer conferences. Prior to 1904, conferences were held at The University of Tennessee at Knoxville; Asheville, North Carolina; and Waynesville, North Carolina. It was in the vicinity of those last two locations that Weatherford began his search for a permanent site.

Although Weatherford was searching on behalf of the YMCA, his duties as student secretary kept him busy. The International Committee of the YMCA gave him permission to search but required that he do so on his own time. In October 1906 he and Phillips found the site near Black Mountain. He was so positive that the location was the right one, that the two men borrowed money from an Asheville bank to purchase the first 952 acres and gave personal notes for the balance owed.

Weatherford wasted no time setting out to raise the half million dollars needed to cover the costs of building facilities and adding another 633 acres of land to the conference center. Some of his more

Lee Lodge. Photo courtesy Melissa Logan, YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly.

impressive donors included John D. Rockefeller, who gave $50,000 to the project, and Grace and Cleveland Dodge who each gave $5,000.

By 1912, the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly was ready to hold its first meeting. According to Weatherford's own account of the assembly entitled *A Venture of Faith*, in that first year, nearly 1,500 guests came. By 1920, the number of visitors had grown to approximately 5,000 each summer. By 1944, that number had climbed into the vicinity of 150,000. In a 1924 brochure promoting the assembly, Weatherford wrote, "Here hundreds of the choicest men and women of the whole South, leaders in thought and action, meet together in happy comradeship, in an ideal environment which tends to rest the body, inform the mind, fire the imagination, and renew the spirit."

In 1919, Weatherford resigned his position with the YMCA so he could follow a new dream. He had played a key role in developing the Southern YMCA College in Nashville, serving as president of the institution until the college closed and merged with Vanderbilt University in 1936. Weatherford then spent a decade at Fisk University in Nashville, where he became head of the Department of Religion and Humanities.

In 1946, even though Weatherford had reached the age of seventy-one, he wasn't ready to end his career. He began work as a fund-raiser and student recruiter for Berea College in Kentucky. One of the highlights of his time there was the acquisition in 1956 of a $250,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to create the Southern Appalachian Studies Project. In 1965 he became a member of the North Carolina Governor's Council on Aging and served until his death at the age of ninety-four in 1970.

And even though his dreams and ambitions had led him away from that treetop in Black Mountain, he did come full circle and return to his first love. He was buried at Blue Ridge Assembly.

Today, the assembly offers full-service conference facilities on 1,200 acres. There are more than thirty meeting rooms capable of accommodating twenty to 700 guests. Hotel-style rooms and a variety of cottages are available, and many recreational activities are offered. The assembly is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and serves 20,000 guests annually.

On the assembly's website, staff wrote, "Ultimately, our objective is to spread the Assembly's ideals to others; and we intend to do that with the same spirit of service Willis D. Weatherford enunciated almost a hundred years ago. We have endured because of that spirit, because of dedicated staff, tireless board members and our gracious supporters."

Monteith predicts that in the coming century Blue Ridge will continue much as it is now. "I see it still continuing to have far-reaching effects," she said. "The philosophy and programs are there for all time." ❖

Sarah Thomas is a native of French Creek, West Virginia, who now lives in Asheville, North Carolina, with her husband and three dogs. A public relations professional, she does freelance writing for several magazines and is director of development and public relations at the Presbyterian Home for Children in Black Mountain. She holds a B.A. degree in English from the University of South Carolina, Coastal Carolina College.

THE KNOXVILLE YWCA BETWEEN THE WARS

By JUDY LOEST

The YWCA building in downtown Knoxville, Tennessee, on the corner of Clinch and Walnut, is a living link to women's history, a reminder of how vastly different the world was just one generation removed. Walking through it recently, I could sense the layers of stories time has left there, the excitement and dreams of young women who came there from farms and small towns during the Depression in search of a better life.

The concept of the YWCA was begun by a small group of activist women in England in 1855, initially as a hostel for Florence Nightingale's nurses en route to and from the Crimea and then to provide improved working conditions and safe housing for women employed in factories during the Industrial Revolution. The first American YWCA opened in New York City in 1858, and by 1890 the familiar blue triangle hung over doors in cities and on college campuses all over the United States.

The Knoxville Y was granted its charter in 1901 and, until the mid-1940s, was the only Y in East Tennessee (the Bristol and Oak Ridge Ys were founded in 1944 and 1954, respectively). In July 1925, ground was broken for a permanent YWCA building, which, according to a *Knoxville Journal* article at the time, "promises to be one of the finest, most modernly equipped and up-to-date association buildings in the entire south."

And, indeed, it was a point of pride, especially during the 1920s, a decade of prosperity following World War I when the Y's Tea Room was a gathering place for Knoxville's smart set. The Y was also a reputable business education center, training women to meet the growing demand for telegraphers, typists, bookkeepers, and stenographers. By 1930, office work had replaced domestic and factory labor as the most common occupation for urban working women. And when the Depression hit, the Y

Jeannette Hix (left) and Helen Williams. Photo courtesy the Williams family.

proved a valuable resource for reengineering the American culture to meet the challenges of both ongoing poverty and coming wartime.

For the Tennessee Valley, the 1930s was a decade of contrasts. Just as the Depression was beginning fully to affect cities, towns, and farms—rampant unemployment and low crop prices resulting in farm foreclosures—President Roosevelt's New Deal initiatives, particularly the Tennessee Valley Authority, were creating jobs and industry fueled by cheap electricity.

By the end of the decade, increasing numbers of young women were coming to Knoxville to seek employment or attend school. In the spring of 1939, one of those young women was Helen Davis Williams, who, at eighteen, left the family farm in Roane County and moved into the Y. She would have come a year earlier, but her father suffered a stroke and she stayed to help her mother take care of him. Her father died nine months later.

Williams's first and only roommate at the Y was a girl from Shelbyville, Jeannette Hix, and they became lifetime friends. Rents at the Y then ranged from $1.25 to $3 per week depending on salary (the average salary was $62 per month) and included maid service once a week with clean linen. Williams lived there for three years, the maximum length of residence allowed.

Seeing the YWCA today, an older, boxy, four-story brick now dwarfed by its neighbors, it is hard to imagine the early excitement it must have generated and how fortunate and modern those young women who were admitted must have felt. At the time, apartments were still rare in Knoxville. There were a couple of boarding houses, but these did not often accept women. Even if they did, they were not considered suitable residences for nice girls. A girl might have found a room in a private home, but she might have had to do housework. On the farms, they had their fill of housework and were now intent on becoming career women.

By the time Williams arrived, the Y no longer operated a tea room or gave classes for the purpose of job training. It was solely a women's residence. The conduct code and house rules were pretty much the same as they were at the Barbizon Hotel for Women in New York City (which, coincidentally, was also built in 1925): be home by eleven p.m. and no men past the lobby. Girls had to sign out in the evening, noting where they were going and what time they expected to be back. Williams said if they returned later than eleven, the night watchman let them in.

Williams and Hix's room was furnished with two single beds (smaller than twin), a small table between, and one dresser with two large drawers and two small ones they shared. Showers and bath were down the hall and shared by all floor residents. The girls did their own laundry and ironing, hand-washing clothes in tubs in the third-floor laundry room. Ironing was a big chore because most of their clothes were cotton.

Williams signed a note at Draughons Business College for her tuition, which took her a couple of years to pay off. Her first nine months she attended Draughons (then located a block from the Y near the corner of Clinch and Market streets) and, upon graduation, got her first job as receptionist and bookkeeper for an optometrist. Soon after, she began evening classes at The University of Tennessee and moved into better-paying jobs, first at the Veterans Administration and later the Social Security Administration.

The Y no longer operated a cafeteria, but Williams often began her weekdays with a five-cent bowl of cereal in the dining room. A typical lunch at Cole's Drugstore consisted of a bowl of chili and corn muffin for ten cents. Other times she ate at Kress's lunch

room or, as her salaries grew, at S&W Cafeteria on Gay Street.

A splurge for dinner would be a home-cooked meal at Bryant's Restaurant across the street from the Y—a meat, two vegetables, salad, bread, iced tea, and dessert for thirty-five cents, twenty-five without the meat. Often she and her friend walked across the Henley Street bridge for a ten-cent hot dog at the Smoky Mountain Market.

One of her fondest memories of food during those years revolves around a simple peanut butter sandwich. When money was tight, she and her roommate walked to the A&P on Market Street, bought bananas, peanut butter, and a loaf of bread (five cents) and, back in their room, made sandwiches for dinner. She said it was like a picnic.

There were various clubs at the Y, such as the Business Girls Club, which met certain evenings, held classes, and brought in guest speakers, but for the ambitious type, weeknights were taken up with evening school or study. Since a six-day work week was common, most of the girls worked Saturdays.

Although her work week was long, Saturdays were always exciting. "It was fun at the Y," Williams told me when I visited her recently at her home in Bearden. "The jitterbug was the craze, and there were Saturday dances regularly in the Y's gym, and the YMCA boys would come." There were also the formal Nahheey-ayli dances at the University of Tennessee's Alumni Gym where she danced to some of the most popular orchestras of the Big Band era—Glenn Miller, Harry James, and Tommy Dorsey.

"We never lacked for dates," she said. "Girls would often come with extra boys. The only telephone in the building was in the office, and boys were always fussing because they couldn't get through."

. . . she danced to some of the most popular orchestras of the Big Band era—Glenn Miller, Harry James, and Tommy Dorsey.

And, of course, they walked everywhere—to work, school, and church, to movies at the Tennessee or Riviera theaters, plays and revues at the Bijou or Tyson Junior High School, dances at Alumni Gym. For longer treks, such as to the fairgrounds at Chilhowee Park, they rode streetcars. With all that walking, shoe stores and shoe repair shops were plentiful. Williams remembers seven or eight downtown retailers that sold shoes.

Although high unemployment lasted into the early 1940s, Knoxville had a thriving downtown at mid-day. Because all the stores closed around five or five-thirty at the latest, shopping was done during lunch hour. Williams remembers shopping at the three main department stores at the time, Miller's and George's on Gay Street and Watson's on Market Square.

Scanning a few *Knoxville Journal* newspapers from that period, I was enthralled by the ads and the low prices: Easter hats $1.98, women's shoes and dresses $3.95, evening dresses $5.98 to $10.98, Tussy Lipstick 25 cents, a '38 Chevy Town Sedan $575. Odder still was to see an ad for "blood-tested, purebred Indiana Hatched Baby Chicks $8/100, ten cents ea or $1.10/doz" by D. R. Mayo, Seedman, at 419 Wall Avenue, alongside an ad for "Exclusive Paris Creations" at the French Booterie on the corner of Union and Market.

For the girls at the Y, home entertainment was pretty much limited to card games, library books, and radio. Williams and Hix had a radio in their room. "We had good music then," she laughs, "none of this beating and banging." And they loved playing Monopoly, a game introduced in 1935 by Parker Brothers that allowed every player to be a real estate tycoon.

Expensive, experimental televisions, vacuum cleaners, and air conditioning were sold in some

American cities in 1939, but in Knoxville they were practically nonexistent. Although rural electrification began in 1935, by 1939 only twenty-five percent of rural households had electricity. When Williams left the family farm, it was still on the carbide system, which only fueled lights, iron, and hotplate. Watson's Department Store didn't get air conditioning until the summer of 1940. Folks hand-cranked their own ice cream, but if you had an extra five cents, you could buy a cone at Kay's Ice Cream Parlor on Magnolia.

On Sundays, Williams attended the First Methodist Church on the corner of Clinch and Locust next to the Hotel Arnold. Once or twice a month, she took the Greyhound bus to Roane County to visit her mother. It was on one of those visits in 1941 when she heard war had been declared.

After that, social life for the women at the Y came to a halt—there were no men left to date. And since nurses had also gone to war, Williams, along with many other young women, began working nights for the Red Cross at Fort Sanders Hospital. In the spring of 1942, as the government initiated food rationing, Williams and Hix ended their tenure at the Y and moved into an apartment. A year later, Hix and some of their friends left Knoxville to take jobs in the ship-building factories in Jacksonville, Florida, and Corpus Christi, Texas.

When Williams married six years later, Hix, who had married and settled in Texas, sent Williams her entire wedding ensemble for the wedding. "Everything," said Williams, "was a perfect fit except the shoes, which were too tight, but I wore them anyway." The couples visited each other often, and, after Williams's husband died, she and Hix continued to exchange letters and phone calls until Hix passed away in 2005.

Williams hasn't been downtown much since Watson's and Miller's closed—she says the one-way streets are too confusing—but she looks back on her days at the Y with fondness. I asked her how she could have left her family to come to a "big city" alone, without a job or personal connections, and she laughed and said she guessed she was too young to know better. But the Y made that huge leap possible. And those young women, brave and resourceful and independent right out of high school, paved the way for future generations of women to move effortlessly into the workforce, to choose between work and family, to forge their own destinies. ❖

Today, women seek shelter at the YWCA for many reasons. They may be homeless, recovering from addiction or mental illness, seeking continuing education, or escaping abusive relationships. The Y's many programs include Victims Advocacy, parenting classes, after-school and summer programs for middle schoolers, and youth leadership via the Y-Teens. The YWCA sponsors several events such as the 5k Race Against Racism in January, the Tribute to Women banquet in August, and Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October. And the Y continues a long tradition of swimming instruction to adults and youth in the community.

Born in Snowflake, Virginia, Judy Loest earned her master's degree in English from The University of Tennessee in 1998. Her honors include the 2004 James Still Poetry Award and the 2004 Olay/Poetry Society of America Fine Lines Poetry Contest. She finds much of her poetic inspiration in cemeteries.

THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

It's Not Easy Being Green

By SCOTT ROBERTSON

"The idea of Green Power Switch is not to replace coal at any point in the future."

John Moulton, senior manager, TVA News Bureau

The Tennessee Valley Authority is getting greener, but not everyone at the utility is thrilled about it. TVA's Green Power Switch program is designed to offer power from renewable resources to help meet consumers' growing energy needs. But those at the utility who are responsible for selling the program to the media seem unimpressed by its potential, environmental activists are equally unimpressed by the program's lack of scope, consumers are unwilling to pay higher rates for green power, and those who run the program sound as though they've been asked by the utility to raise sheep in cattle country.

Admittedly, those who have doubts about TVA's environmental commitment have ample historical precedent behind them. Remember the snail darter? It was the tiny fish that almost derailed the Tennessee Valley Authority's Tellico Dam project in the 1970s. When TVA blanched at letting the presence of a tiny endangered fish species prevent the construction of a multi-million-dollar flood control and hydroelectric generation facility, the utility went from being a Roosevelt-era darling of the Democrats to being

Rick Carson, on Buffalo Mountain near Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Photo by Scott Robertson.

considered by many just another heartless big business, as anti-environmental as any smoke-belching foundry.

And TVA is still belching a lot of smoke. According to a TVA pollution prevention report, "In 2004, TVA utilized 2.6 million metric tons (2.9 million tons) of coal combustion products and in 2005 increased the figure by nearly 7 percent, to 2.8 million metric tons (3.1 million tons)."

Currently, less than one percent of the power generated by TVA comes from green power sources including wind power, solar power, and methane gas. "Around sixty percent comes from coal," says Gil Francis, spokesman for TVA. "Approximately thirty percent comes from hydroelectric power." Around nine percent comes from nuclear power generation.

So how, based on those numbers, can TVA be said to be getting greener? TVA is actually ahead of the green power demand curve. "We are producing more green power right now than we are selling," says Rick Carson, the man who runs TVA's giant windmill farm on Buffalo Mountain near Oak Ridge. In other words, if there's not enough green power being generated right now, dear consumer, it's because you don't want it badly enough.

Everyone Knows It's Windy

The Buffalo Mountain facility is a small program, by world wind power standards. Denmark alone has over 5,000 active turbines, many made by the Vestas Corporation. The TVA pilot program includes three Vestas turbines with forty-seven-meter rotor diameter on sixty-five-meter towers, which were installed in October 2000. Once that program was up and running, an additional fifteen turbines were installed beginning in December 2004.

"TVA signed a power purchaser agreement with Invenergy, a company out of Chicago, for the new wind turbines," says Carson. "They own the new wind turbines through a limited liability company and sell the power to TVA." The new turbines have a one-hundred-meter rotor diameter and they stand on eighty-meter towers.

The combined wind power generated at the facility is twenty-nine megawatts. "That's enough to power about 3,700 homes," says Carson. The 8,000,000+ kilowatt hours produced from July to September 2006 on the wind farm was just over half the Green Power Switch program total.

"One weakness of wind power, and of solar power, is that there is demand twenty-four hours a day," says Francis. "The wind doesn't blow here twenty-four hours a day, every day. The sun certainly isn't up twenty-four hours a day."

That, suggests Benjamin K. Sovacool, Eugene P. Wigner Fellow with the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and a recent visitor to the wind farm, would not be such a weakness if there were a greater commitment to wind power including a network of windmills similar to the Danish model. "In Denmark," he says, "the wind is always blowing somewhere."

That argument is met by concerns of those worried about the aesthetic ill effects of having 150-foot-tall windmills running along every mountain ridge in the TVA service area. "Aesthetics is the primary argument against wind power," says Carson.

Let the Sunshine In

Think it's tough to get a reasonably powerful network of windmills up and running? Try solar collectors. The Green Power Switch program uses a network of seventeen collector stations throughout Tennessee and into Southwest Virginia. Yet when one compares the total output of the seventeen solar collectors to that of the eighteen windmills at Buffalo Mountain, the paucity of solar power is stunning. (See table.) It's somewhere in the neighborhood of two percent. The "why bother?" mentality seems more and more reasonable every time one sees those numbers.

It's a Gas, Gas, Gas

Of all the Green Power Switch programs, the one with what appears to be the path of least resistance into mainstream use is methane gas. Currently, TVA takes a methane gas by-product created at the Memphis wastewater treatment plant and fires it with coal at TVA's nearby Allen Fossil Plant. The end results are encouraging. Coal use is lessened and greenhouse gas emissions are curtailed. But make no mistake. For the foreseeable future at TVA, coal will be king.

Meet the New Boss

Green power is a good idea, says John Moulton, senior manager of the TVA News Bureau, but "the idea of Green Power Switch is not to replace coal at any point in the future. It is to offer power generated from renewable resources to customers who would like to have the option to buy it." And right now, there aren't enough of those customers to buy what little is being produced. ❖

Green Power Switch Generation Kilowatt-hours (kWh)

Solar Power Sites	June — September 2006
Adventure Science Center	7,786
Dollywood Tram C	3,114
Dollywood Tram D/E	3,079
Gibson County High School	7,050
Ijams Nature Center	5,699
Cocke County High School	3,595
Duffield Primary School	3,505
Sci-Quest	9,078
American Museum of Science & Energy	1,765
Lovers Lane Soccer Complex	12,824
Finley Stadium	20,504
Florence Wastewater Treatment Facility	13,782
University of Mississippi	12,827
Mississippi State University	6,351
Bridges Center	12,076
Morgan County Vocational Technical School	2,784
Generation Partners	33,790
Total solar generation	159,608
Wind power site	June — September 2006
Buffalo Mountain Wind Farm	8,163,572
Methane gas site	June — September 2006
Allen Steam Plant	7,468,866
Green Power Switch Total Generation	15,792,046

Table courtesy TVA

Scott Robertson is a lifelong Tennessee resident and is a TVA Green Power Switch customer. He has worked as a writer and editor in the Tri-Cities area of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia for over fifteen years. He is currently editor of *The Business Journal of Tri-Cities, TN/VA*.

THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN LABOR SCHOOL:

Communities of Difference and Development in Southern West Virginia

By CHRIS BAKER

Like many rural areas across the nation, West Virginia's former coal camps face a disproportionate amount of poverty, neglect, and powerlessness. The region's political economy has left an indelible imprint on a population now challenged by substandard housing, limited access to health and human services, and low levels of social capital and educational attainment. In the post-industrial economy, rural populations are searching for inventive ways to address basic needs and development options. Recent approaches use community centers to combine multiple strategies, alliances, and programs to facilitate rural populations. Community Based Organizations (CBOs) integrate the class and cultural differences found in the nation's academic and volunteer organizations with Appalachian communities in surprising ways.

Dedicated to solving problems defined by communities, Appalachia's CBOs and nonprofit organizations affirm cultural values and address pathologies linked to neglect and powerlessness. While creating regional alliances, institutions such as Whitesburg, Kentucky's Appalshop, the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA), and the Highlander Research and Education Center have been at the forefront of community and cultural activism. These nonprofit organizations have chronicled the region's rich heritage and contributed to the understanding of rural Appalachia's social systems as survival strategies and formations of resistance to domination (see "Activism in Appalachia" in the fall 1990 *Now & Then*).

A SALS AmeriCorps participant works on a rehabilitation. Often contractors are reluctant to do jobs that require rebuilding substandard homes. Photo by Chris Baker.

A less well-known nonprofit, The Southern Appalachian Labor School, or SALS, represents one of the region's most creative approaches to development. Located in the community of Beards Fork, SALS programs and its community center are influencing the quality of life in a number of rural neighborhoods in southern West Virginia. With programs dedicated to housing, health care, after-school and daycare, job training, and other basic needs, the center integrates volunteers from every corner of society into rural development. Set in rural hollows off Highway 61 between Montgomery and Oak Hill

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The *Now & Then* family wish to express our condolences to the families of

Wilma Dykeman Stokely

1920 - 2006

Dr. Daniel G. Leidig

1928 - 2006

Please honor their memory
by turning to pages 6 and 37 of this issue.

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John David, can best be described as a resourceful problem solver. A professor of economics and chair of the Department of Social Sciences at West Virginia University Institute of Technology (WVU-Tech), David served in the Peace Corps in Ghana and earned a Ph.D. in economics from West Virginia University. Working with mining rank and file on literacy campaigns, SALS received its 501(c)(3) nonprofit classification in 1981. David shifted the emphasis of SALS to a community center approach by moving the organization to the abandoned Loup Creek schoolhouse in 1996. Helen M. Powell, the SALS board chair, helped draft the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act and the 1972 Black Lung Amendments. She is a retired social services coordinator of Fayette County Child Development Inc. or Head Start. Staff member Gary Zuckett currently connects SALS with a number of grassroots coalitions. SALS addresses environmental and economic justice, black lung disease, and health-care reform through its collaborations. Board members and partners include college presidents, bankers, and Festival, now in its sixteenth year.

Through a number of collaborations, programs at Beards Fork address youth development and family services. Running six weeks each summer, the center's Energy Express program is the only one in Fayette County, and of eighty in the nation, the SALS program is the only one operated by a community center. With its partners and collaborations, the center accesses health services, the reduced costs food program Share, and education through the

A less well-known nonprofit, The Southern Appalachian Labor School, or SALS, represents one of the region's most creative approaches to development. Located in the community of Beards Fork, SALS programs and its community center are influencing the quality of life in a number of rural neighborhoods in southern West Virginia. With programs dedicated to housing, health care, after-school and daycare, job training, and other basic needs, the center integrates volunteers from every corner of society into rural development. Set in rural hollows off Highway 61 between Montgomery and Oak Hill in Fayette County, the twelve communities live in some of West Virginia's earliest coal camps, which are now isolated from growth centers. Funded and supported through a multiplicity of collaborations and partnerships, SALS goes beyond a charity model of development to a new type of approach to self-help initiatives. The CBO approach to meeting basic needs often challenges market-centered theories to community development. These organizations have become locations where non-profits, businesses, charities, colleges, and government programs are listening to the vision of rural communities instead of the reverse. Community service programs at SALS vary from the Global Volunteers to Group Work Camp and College Workcamps. In addition, a number of public and private colleges and universities send volunteer groups to the center. Added to the mix are AmeriCorps-USA, Learn and Serve, and VISTA volunteers.

The organization's co-founder and director, John David, can best be described as a resourceful problem solver. A professor of economics and chair of the Department of Social Sciences at West Virginia University Institute of Technology (WVU-Tech), David served in the Peace Corps in Ghana and earned a Ph.D. in economics from West Virginia University. Working with mining rank and file on literacy campaigns, SALS received its 501(c)(3) nonprofit classification in 1981. David shifted the emphasis of SALS to a community center approach by moving the organization to the abandoned Loup Creek schoolhouse in 1996. Helen M. Powell, the SALS board chair, helped draft the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act and the 1972 Black Lung Amendments. She is a retired social services coordinator of Fayette County Child Development Inc. or Head Start. Staff member Gary Zuckett currently connects SALS with a number of grassroots coalitions. SALS addresses environmental and economic justice, black lung disease, and health-care reform through its collaborations. Board members and partners include college presidents, bankers, extension agents, governors, union leaders, and members of Congress.

SALS operates a worker education program around the idea of forming a union of volunteers, families, and alliances. The legacy of West Virginia's communities is one where neighbor supported neighbor faced with black lung disease, substandard company housing, and boom and bust economic cycles. Company stores were common in this part of Fayette County as late as the 1960s, often leaving communities to rely on themselves during hard times. Drawing on Appalachia's rural traditions, the large volume of participants generates a new extended community characterized by social differences. Yet Appalachian culture is highlighted by the center. Volunteer groups attend lectures on the history of Appalachia, coal, unions, economics, and labor. Included in the lectures is the history of Mother Jones, who was imprisoned for union organizing a few miles away. Every May SALS holds an Annual Workers Solidarity Cultural Festival, now in its sixteenth year.

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21st century Program. The New River/Beards Fork Health Clinic Project brings primary health care to surrounding rural communities through monthly onsite visits and trips to the WVU-Tech dental school. SALS operates six ongoing housing programs which build new homes, rehabilitate substandard homes, or weatherize existing homes. Staff members determine eligibility, write grants, and assist in applications for local families. The programs are generating new neighborhoods such as New Page Housing and Hilltop. For black lung widows, children, and other low-income residents, the work on their houses creates a new, safe environment. The housing programs rely on grants from the West Virginia Housing Development Fund, the USDA, and the Federal Home Loan Bank.

Beyond sustainable housing, SALS programs also address social and human capital for at-risk youth. In the face of West Virginia's growing prison population, the center provides a new onsite substance abuse program. The Workforce Investment Act and Youth Enrichment Services provide job training. The center works with troubled youth through grants from YouthBuild sponsored by HUD and the Youth Re-Entry Program through YouthBuild USA and the U.S. Department of Labor. YouthBuild provides up to $400,000 each cycle for training youth without high-school diplomas.

Participants in the programs have daily contact with SALS staff, community members, college students, and other volunteer groups. They prepare to take GED tests and learn construction and other life skills. Youth re-entry is designed to work with offenders and serves as an alternative to jail. A central feature of the region's CBOs is the fostering of indigenous leadership. With a community center approach, the programs provide jobs to locals who might otherwise have to leave their community.

The community center is operated by a local multicultural staff. With the exception of David, who has a Jewish heritage, the organization's leadership is indigenous to the area. Women serve as construction supervisors, education and health services program directors, housing specialists and directors, and grant writers. The center's chair and vice-chair are African American, the treasurer is a Catholic nun, and the secretary is Cherokee.

Using community capital, staff members draw on social networks to involve family members and assess the needs of community members, especially the elderly, infirm, and single mothers and children. Empowering women is especially important to development in communities plagued by black lung disease. The center connects local families to black lung clinics.

Learning to Serve Others to Help Themselves

By addressing empowerment as central to rural development, SALS not only facilitates self help, but it also breaks down stereotypes of the region's culture. The multicultural reality of the participants with differences in culture, religion, race, class, age, and region challenges the social fabric of both locals and visitors. Volunteering within this milieu creates experiences outside the hyper-segregation often found in the modern American residential and education landscape.

An estimated 1,608 volunteers helped out in 2006. Colleges use SALS programs for al-

Service learning participants from several colleges pause in front of a new home project near Beards Fork. Photo by Chris Baker.

ternative spring breaks and service learning throughout the year. Student groups vary in size from a van load to 300 students from the Pennsylvania Christian Endeavor program. Denominations and churches sending volunteers include Presbyterian, Lutheran, Catholic, Episcopal, Methodist, and Church of Christ.

During summer months the programs include large groups of volunteers from the Summer GroupWork camps, a Colorado-based nonprofit organization that sends volunteers to forty-eight states. In 2006, 1,200 volunteers came in six waves to West Virginia from every corner of the country to work on construction sites. The camps often weatherize hundreds of homes at once.

On any given day at a SALS worksite, a Midwestern or Northeastern college student or AmeriCorps volunteer works with a low-income resident in search of a GED. A Disney executive in the Global Volunteers finds himself doing basic construction on an elderly black lung widow's home.

A week in West Virginia leaves permanent changes within individuals. Local participants gain social capital along with life skills and services while they experience other cultures. By working with troubled youth, the visitors reduce criminality and teach responsibility. For outsiders, it is exposure to rural social bonds that creates a new understanding of Appalachian culture beyond mass media stereotypes. The sense of pace and organization of rural community life is a powerful experience. Appalachia's community proximity and tradition of reciprocity are part of a moral economy lost to many in the suburbs. Instead of a charity approach, volunteers leave with a focus on what is missing in their own lives as well as experiences with race, class, and cultural differences on an equal footing. One AmeriCorps participant comments, "There were lessons every day I was there. From when to keep my mouth shut to appreciating the moon and the stars, mountains, and land, or how I need to simplify my life."

Appalachia's community proximity and tradition of reciprocity is part of a moral economy lost to many in the suburbs.

Making Community Ends Meet

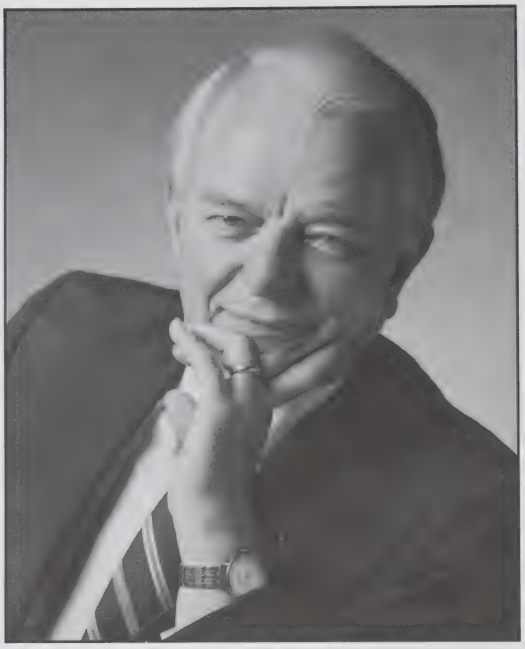
Recent federal and state budget cuts have not been kind to nonprofits. John David knows better than most the challenges that CBOs face in the current political climate. SALS has successfully taken advantage of West Virginia's tax credits program with donations of land, mobile homes, vehicles, and building materials. However, cuts in programs and rising insurance and material costs can slow progress. David writes in a recent SALS newsletter, "Funding has become extremely tight, as those funds that are available are prioritized and/or diverted for various reasons."

For its work, SALS has been recognized by the United Mine Workers, HUD, CORA, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. The center won the Appalachian Studies Association Helen M. Lewis Community Service Award in 2004. Recent strides to build coalitions supporting existing CBOs and nonprofits such as JustConnections are evidence of the continued commitment by institutions to rural communities in the region. The energy derived from the alliances SALS has created is more proof of the often untapped resources available within the region's institutions. However, the struggle to provide new development visions and build capacity can only succeed by expanding and scaling-up rural development from the grassroots to larger power structures. This will require a renewed political involvement of scholars, activists, professionals, and colleges in the region. ❖

Dr. Chris Baker is professor of sociology at Walters State Community College in Morristown, Tennessee.

CALVIN CORNELIUS SALE, JR., BECOMES SENATOR ROBERT BYRD

By BARBARA RASMUSSEN

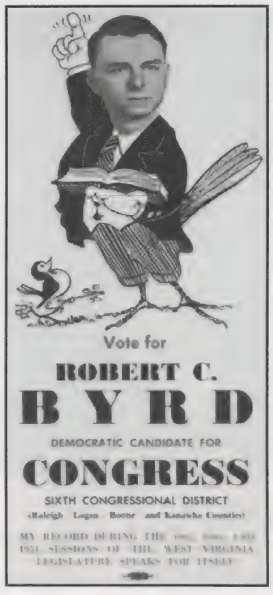


Senator Robert Carlyle Byrd, Democrat of West Virginia, is the state's longest serving U.S. Senator and has become an enduring Appalachian institution in his own right. First elected to the U.S. Senate in 1958, Byrd took advantage of the opportunities presented by then Senate majority leader Lyndon B. Johnson and joined the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee as a freshman senator. Byrd has been continuously re-elected to his position, and his seniority has paid big dividends for his West Virginia constituents.

He has used his power to strengthen the infrastructure of the Appalachian region, particularly his home state of West Virginia. His mastery of the senate's rules and procedures helped him procure the two most influential posts in that body: chairman of the Appropriations Committee and majority leader. Byrd has authored a history of the Senate and has compiled a statistical profile of it as well. These documents are valuable research aids.

Senator Robert Carlyle Byrd. Portrait photograph by Mary Noble Ours.

A scholar of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. Constitution, Byrd rose above his hard-scrabble upbringing in Raleigh County, West Virginia, to complete his law degree at American University while he was serving in the U.S. House of Representatives. As a young senator in 1958, Byrd was a conservative southern Democrat. His service on the Washington, D.C., Oversight Committee, which he took very seriously, brought him into sharp conflict with the civil rights movement of the 1960s. At home, he stood against much pressure from West Virginia labor leaders by voting against the 1964 Civil Rights Act. His segregationist past died hard, but the senator has repeatedly repudiated his early brief membership in the Ku Klux Klan, dismissing it as an "indiscretion of youth."



Despite this early perspective, Byrd continued to learn, responding to political realities and the changing world. Unafraid to confront and challenge his own perspectives, his outlook on civil rights softened through the 1960s and 1970s. By the 1980s and 1990s, he had become an outspoken supporter of civil rights. In April 2006, he spoke at the one hundredth anniversary of the Niagara Movement, at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. In acknowledging the successes of the group which became the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Byrd said, "Mountains can be moved. Prejudice can be overcome and the course of history can be changed."

Although he has strongly defended equal rights in the workplace and equal pay for equal work, he has also cited the separation of powers as the reason he voted against equal opportunity employment regulations for Congress, explaining that the independence of the legislative branch of government should not be regulated by the executive branch in any matter whatsoever.

Senator Byrd is a voracious reader and a constant worker. Rarely appearing on the Washington, D. C., social circuit, he instead devotes his time to his work and to his family. As majority leader of the Senate, he traveled widely and contributed much to the normalization of American relations with the Eastern Bloc nations. While he was Senate majority leader, he enjoyed a chauffeured limousine—not for the prestige but for the time it afforded him to read. When political winds shifted and he lost that benefit of office, he lamented most the lost reading time, not the status of the limousine.

Byrd very effectively shifted federal aid for his region away from handout programs that encouraged economic dependency to projects that contributed infrastructure improvements as well as longterm employment. Speaking to a West Virginia crowd in the late 1990s, Byrd acknowledged his nickname inside the Washington, D.C., Beltway as "The King of Pork," and chortled to the crowd, saying, "[T]hey don't know how much I love it." His most lasting contribution to the Appalachian region may be his success in channeling support and funding to government agencies and enterprises that relocated there, often at his behest.

Byrd was a protégé of Georgia Senator Richard Russell and proved an apt student, learning how to exploit parliamentary procedures and Senate rules to great advantage. He became an unchallenged master of those maneuvers. He uses his knowledge of the U.S. Senate's history and his knowledge of the ancient Roman Senate to take successful, and often risky, positions on major political issues. He has been unafraid to take

1953 Congressional Race Blotter. Courtesy MotionMasters' "The Soul of the Senate: A Documentary of U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd."

unpopular positions and to break with the Democratic Party leadership on issues of principle. He is an ardent defender of the separation of powers and zealously guards Congressional prerogatives, especially those of the Senate. When President Richard Nixon offered to appoint him to the U.S. Supreme Court, Byrd declined, realizing that he would be able to contribute much more as a powerful senator than as a justice. He well understood that his nomination would have given the Senate a terrible dilemma between loyalty to a colleague and insistence upon adequate legal experience, since Byrd never actually practiced as an attorney. He also understood that as a powerful Democratic senator, he was an effective obstacle to the Republican political agenda.

He was born Calvin Cornelius Sale, Jr., on November 20, 1917, in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, to Ada and Cornelius Sale, and was left motherless a year later when the great influenza epidemic claimed Ada's life. He was reared by an aunt and uncle, Vlerma Sale and Titus Dalton Byrd, who renamed him. In spite of his grinding poverty growing up in Crab Orchard, a West Virginia coal camp, Byrd was valedictorian of his 1934 high-school class at the age of sixteen. He became a butcher and in 1937 married his high-school sweetheart, Erma Ora James, who was the daughter of a coal miner. A succession of low-level jobs followed their marriage. On the eve of World War II, Byrd worked as a welder in defense industries in the Florida and Maryland shipyards. He also pumped gas and clerked in a coal company store.

Erma remained the love of his life until her death in March 2006. His devotion to her is the stuff of legend. Throughout her life, Mrs. Byrd removed herself from political issues because, she said, "the voters elected Robert, not me, to office." In her appearances with the Senator, Mrs. Byrd was unfailingly gracious and unfailingly non-political.

Robert Byrd's introduction to politics was cold—the Raleigh County Democratic Executive Committee advised him against running for office in a crowded field in 1946. However, he persevered, using his skills as a traditional mountain fiddler to win votes in that election to the West Virginia House of Delegates. Republican political party advisor and Benedum Oil Company executive Samuel T. Mallinson was philosophic about Byrd's victory. He observed that Byrd fiddled and the Republicans burned. Mallinson began to retool his political kit to accept the Democrat Byrd into the fold of West Virginia elites. It was a hard step for conservative Republican industrialists, but Mallinson knew he was dealing with substantial political savvy in Robert C. Byrd, so he forged a friendship that lasted throughout his life.

Byrd served one term in the West Virginia House of Delegates and in 1950 was elected to the state senate. During his service in state government, Byrd pursued a college degree, taking classes at several state colleges. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1952.

One of Byrd's most impressive skills is his ability to serve multiple constituencies at the same time. He supports both the labor lobby and the interests of the extractive industries. However, he has also carefully nurtured other interests that are less tied to coal or labor, thereby establishing a constituency

Senator Byrd tuning fiddle. Courtesy MotionMasters' "The Soul of the Senate: A Documentary of U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd."

whose middle-class ranks are slowly filling with workers and government contractors who bring new political and economic expectations to West Virginia. For example, technology and tourism are now multi-million-dollar industries in the Mountain State that are spinning off modest prosperity in new directions. ❖

Author's Acknowledgements

The letters of Senator Byrd, upon which this article is largely based, are housed in West Virginia University's Regional History Collection. The papers of Samuel T. Mallinson, Governor Hulett C. Smith, and Miles Stanley, the late president of the West Virginia AFL-CIO, were valuable source materials as well.

Dr. Barbara Rasmussen is an assistant professor of history and coordinator of the graduate program in Cultural Resource Management and Public History at West Virginia University. A native West Virginian with deep roots in the state, she is active in many historic preservation initiatives. She is the author of *Absentee Landowning and Exploitation in West Virginia: 1760-1920*, published by the University Press of Kentucky in 1994.

Launch

By DAN LEIDIG

The old man is lifting from his chair.
Breathing a bit like Apollo tethered,
his countdown is precisely measured,
his lift-off is absent roar, thrust, flair.
He leans toward Spain, Perth, L.A., God.
Holding by fingertip the unsteady earth,
he tilts toward precarious flight, rolls
to correct his course by slow degrees.
With subtle curl of toe and calibrated knee
he subdues the arch arthritis of the world.

His sons and daughters avert their eyes;
their body language is at pains to speak
of no surprise at his unsteady stance
of almost-flight, poised precisely
between vertical—and not.
His frozen frame seems on hold
for one last shot to catch a static tintype
forever to preserve the generation gap.

And just before the room self-destructs
from angst and misplaced pity
he glides away with courtly bow,
articulated by his bemused recall
of how he once possessed enough
of savoir faire, and mayhap of grace,
to launch novitiates arriving
to claim his receding space.

Dan Leidig's poetry collections are *Contrary Motions* (1995) and *Return to Genesis* (1997). His poems have appeared recently in *Sewanee Review, Now & Then*, and *Appalachian Journal*. In 1997, Emory & Henry College established a lectureship in poetry in his name.

FROM CONFRONTATION TO RECONCILIATION,
FROM BOMBING TO BRICKS TO BROTHERHOOD:

THE STORY OF THE BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

Introduction and Interview by FRED SAUCEMAN

"I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are at present misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
from "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
April 16, 1963

"Now for the first time our community has an opportunity to tell its own story about the city's past. From the promised magic in the 19th century, through the tragedy of racial relations in the 20th century, we will show Birmingham evolving as an example of racial equality and cooperation. More importantly we will also celebrate our progress in human relations and our hope for continued progress in the future."

From the Mission Statement
for the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute
August 20, 1986

Yellow lantana and purple sweet potato vines color Kelly Ingram Park at midsummer in Birmingham, Alabama. Children cavort. Mothers roll strollers. Toddlers careen down a blue and yellow inflated slide during the Juneteenth celebration.

The grounds of this urban park are groomed today, but in the summer of 1963, the grass was puddled with the spewing of fire hoses, the soil scratched by the digging claws of police dogs straining their leashes and lurching for human flesh. The grass was reddened by the blood of children.

Kids of all colors innocently play ball in the park nowadays, an act that would have resulted in strict censure a generation ago, should a ball-

game have turned interracial. Section 597 of the Birmingham Racial Segregation Ordinances, passed by the city council on May 25, 1951, stated: "Negroes and White Persons Not to Play Together: It shall be unlawful for a Negro and a white person to play together or in company with each other in any game of cards, dice, dominoes, checkers, baseball, softball, football, basketball or similar game."

Odessa Woolfolk points out those words to me in a place where she has invested much of the past twenty years of her life, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. Within the walls of Alabama brick is recounted Birmingham's rise from the depths of its reputation as the most segregated city in America. The institute borders Kelly Ingram Park, where Woolfolk was forbidden to go as a young woman, just as she was turned away from the downtown public library, despite her credentials as a teacher of history.

Odessa Woolfolk grew up in the Titusville section of Birmingham, and it was to her that the leaders of the city turned when they were planning a Civil Rights Institute. She chaired the task force that planned and directed the institute's development, and she became its first administrator and board president.

I sit with her in the library one summer day as she tells of the struggles and triumphs that culminated in the opening of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute back in 1992.

Then as we walk through the building, she points out the picture of her mother and her classmates from the segregated Birmingham Industrial High School class of 1926, a shot she had never seen until it appeared on a wall in the institute.

Odessa Woolfolk stops in front of a black-and-white television set and identifies one of her very own high school students, captured in a 1963 television news story as he confronted police, their dogs, and their water hoses in the park that is now sacred ground, honoring and memorializing

the heroes—the footsoldiers as well as the famous—in the fight for freedom and racial equality in America.

FS: Take me back to the initial discussions about establishing a Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham and tell me how it developed.

OW: David Vann, mayor of Birmingham from 1975 to 1979, was the first public official to say to the community, we ought to find a way to memorialize what we're best known for, and that is our civil rights history. There was a tendency among the civic leadership not to want to hear reminders of what happened in Kelly Ingram Park, reminders of that awful period of segregation. It was an irritant in Birmingham's public life whenever a New York newspaper or television station or any outsiders reminded us that we were once about police dogs and fire hoses. In 1978, David Vann said this is who we were, it's not who we are now. We're striving to be a better, more humane society. He proposed the idea for an institute, but people didn't think too well of it at that time.

Vann was defeated in 1979 and was succeeded by Dick Arrington, the first African American mayor of Birmingham. He had been on the city council for eight years and had been a dean at Miles College. His platform on the city council had a lot to do with eradicating police abuse and brutality, a legacy from the 1960s era. David Vann was a popular, progressive mayor, but what tripped him up was the 1979 killing of a young African American woman, shot by a police officer. The woman was in a car belonging to a suspect who had allegedly robbed a neighborhood store. When the woman attempted to move, the officer thought she was an accomplice and shot. While remorseful, David said under police law, the officer was acting according to policy, since he

Odessa Woolfolk. All photos by Fred Sauceman.

James Drake's sculptured police dogs lunge into the Freedom Walk pathway at Birmingham's Kelly Ingram Park.

thought there was a dangerous person in the car. The black community was quite upset and concluded it was time for David to go. Community leaders prevailed on Dick Arrington to run.

Birmingham is a city of museums, so it wasn't an alien notion to think about a museum on Civil Rights. David Vann had asked the city council for an ordinance creating a museum. Still, people asked why we should open up old wounds. In 1982, a study group called for the creation of a museum. In 1986 Dick Arrington said, "I'm going to move." He appointed a committee to do a feasibility study and determine what the concept ought to be. He asked the city council to appoint a Civil Rights Museum Task Force. Seventeen people were named to serve, and I was asked to chair it. Our first task was to develop a mission statement. We felt it was an opportunity for Birmingham people to tell Birmingham's story and tell it in the context of the nation and world. We found it to be a positive story. We had gone from the confrontation of the 1960s to reconciliation. We weren't quite there, but at least we were on road. It was an engaging, positive story. The mission statement said that Birmingham had recognized the evils of a segregated, separatist system, and while we were painfully making progress, we were in fact making progress.

We had two communities that were strangers to each other. I grew up in Birmingham, so I know what segregation is. I lived it every day. Birmingham was more rigidly segregated than many other cities in the South. The political leadership, led by Eugene "Bull" Connor, commissioner of public safety, rigidly enforced the segregation statutes. It was an oppressive environment here. Black communities were isolated. In 1926, there was an ordinance on the books that said property had to be sold on the basis of race. There was black property and white property. There weren't opportunities for people to get to know each other. This was reinforced by the Klan and carried out by the police. We had a timid civic leadership class. The steel industry was governed by outside people. The owners of the major steel companies didn't live in Birmingham. Many heads of banks and retail establishments didn't vote in Birmingham. Consequently, they were not as influential as they might have been. The police force was repressive, and people stayed in their own groups. In the 1940s and '50s, there were almost fifty unsolved police cases where police had brutalized blacks.

Why do you think you were chosen for the task force?

I had always been civically engaged. In 1986, I was director of the Center for Urban Affairs at The University of Alabama at Birmingham and taught on the faculty in urban studies and government. I had once served as deputy director of the anti-poverty program in the city. I was always interested in race relations and bi-racial understanding. But I wasn't a politician.

What are some of the major hurdles that stood in your way?

The first rough spot was when Mayor Arrington decided the public should vote for a bond issue. It was voted down twice. We finally used a device the municipality had in place to raise general revenue bonds without a vote of the people. Through the Historical Preservation Authority, the city was able to issue bonds. It was a process to get buy-in. Still, though, there was suspicion even in the African American community. The question in doing a museum is always "Whose voice?" The task force included the head of the local chapters of the NAACP and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. There were some who wondered if the grassroots footsoldier's view would be incorporated. In fact, we were criticized for not having enough footsoldiers on the original task force. But we had access to people. Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, the head and founder of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, was a member, as was Reverend Abraham Woods, head of the SCLC. My job was to make sure all appropriate entities were involved.

How was this location chosen?

The mayor and city council had acquired the property early on. This is sacred ground, holy ground. David Vann talked about that all the time. It was where blood was shed, diagonally across from the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church where the four little girls were killed by a bomb on September 15, 1963. Early in the 1980s, the city acquired the property, which once had old apartment houses and a service station on it. The property was acquired through eminent domain and outright sales. Dick Arrington had cleared the land and had the soil tested, prior to 1986. Our job as a task force was to determine our mission, what the structure ought to look like, how much money it would take and where to find it, suggest a gover-

nance structure, and meet with designers paid by the city. Dick told me to stay with the job, as acting director, until it was done. We incorporated a board of directors in January of 1990. The board oversaw the project, and I acted in the role of chief executive officer. My bosses at The University of Alabama at Birmingham saw the value of the project.

Tell me about the design of the building and how it reinforces the theme.

Max Bond, our architect, had done the King Center in Atlanta. He is a cousin of Julian Bond and was on the faculty of the New York University School of Architecture. And the Joseph Wetzel design firm in Boston was chosen. We felt it was important to help people understand how Birmingham got started as a city in 1871. It was a post-Civil War city driven by an industrial base for steel-making. We wanted to show immigrant groups who came to Birmingham for jobs in the steel industry. Then the storyline became chronological, following events from the beginning through the modern era, showing interaction between blacks and whites, focusing on life in the African American community, and including and interspersing events happening elsewhere in the South and the country as they related to civil and human rights. And connecting to the international struggle for freedom.

We didn't want the building to dwarf the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. It's visible from many angles upstairs in the building. The church tells its own story as the open windows on the second and first floors look out on it. Then there are the building materials that were used in the construction of the institute. It's made of Alabama brick. Brick is important in Alabama. If you had a real nice house in Alabama, it was usually brick. Further, we made sure the ceilings in the galleries are open, with exposed beams reminiscent of warehousing, part of the old industrial economy. We wanted to make sure visitors had a sense of marching as they toured the institute. Both parallel hallways outside the galleries have an uneven flow. You're aware that you're moving. The floor's not flat. It's curved and undulating, creating the illusion of movement. And the bricks outside the building are done in an African weave pattern.

Why did you choose to call it an institute and not a museum?

A museum attracts people and gets folks seeing and touching, but an institute reaches out. One of our first projects was oral history, to tell the story of the great issues that marked the struggle for civil rights, the barriers to integration and understanding, and track them through time. It's a story of progress from confrontation to reconciliation.

As you walk through the institute today, what exhibits move you the most?

Hearing Martin Luther King quoting passages from the letter he wrote from the Birmingham jail and sitting behind the very cell that encased him is indeed moving. Also moving is the Montgomery bus boycott story, seeing images of the December 1955 effort, hearing people tell their friends and relatives to stay off the buses, and seeing how almost a year of struggle ended up victoriously. And then there are the black-and-white newsreels from the spring of 1963. I was a high-school teacher in Birmingham then, and I remember how many of my students left school to go and march, which I was supportive of. Getting schoolkids involved was controversial. King and Shuttlesworth didn't immediately think it was the thing to do, and certainly not King. But several members of the SCLC staff decided they were running out of adults to face Bull Connor, the fire hoses, and cattle prods, so they turned to the children. Fliers were sent to the high schools and elementary schools in the area asking kids to come to the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church on a designated day to train for marching and participating in peaceful, nonviolent demonstrations. A lot of kids left school to go. School officials reacted in various ways. Some said if you go, you don't have our permission to skip school. Some school officials sort of ignored that and said it was a good cause worth the risk. When I go through and see older images and see people I know and knew then, it's very personally moving.

What did you tell your students at Ullman High School about going to Kelly Ingram Park to march?

I told my students that I thought they should do what they and their parents felt was the right thing to do, with respect to going down and facing danger. The cause was right, there was no doubt about it. Anyone who took my government and history classes knew where I stood on that issue. That what was going on in Birming-

ham and the Deep South was even un-American. That the Constitution then in 1963 spoke of an open society, and that there were places in the United States of America that were open, and that what was going on in Birmingham was a violation of that. These laws of segregation violated human rights. I went to a college in the 1950s that was an Alabama college for African Americans, one of those schools the American Missionary Association started after the Civil War for freed blacks, with an integrated faculty and one or two white students at the time. The faculty encouraged us to believe that if you had the privilege of being educated in a liberal arts context, you owed it to yourself, one, to be a scholar but, two, to also give service. I had gone to race relations institutes, such as the one at Fisk University, and heard folks like anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn talk about open-mindedness. I was grounded in the belief in human spirit and freedom and not allowing anyone to enslave you. Therefore it was easy for me to encourage our students to believe in that also. And I was just angry. I remember as a teacher, not being able to go to the downtown public library. Going into stores and not being able to try on things. Watching older adults being addressed by their first name. My grandmother always had an answer. She told them her name was Mrs. R.S. Alexander, so if they wanted to call her by her first name and say R.S., that was their problem. I believed what was happening was right. I remember when one class of students came back after having been incarcerated for a week or so. When they returned to my American government class, I decided those who had gone to jail and marched would take over the class and everyone else, including the teacher, would sit in the back. They were the ones who were really the true spirits of what America was about. It's uplifting when they come and talk at the institute, to students who were the age they were back in 1963.

When they returned to my American government class, I decided those who had gone to jail and marched would take over the class and everyone else, including the teacher, would sit in the back.

Were any of your students harmed?

A couple were bitten by police dogs.

How well did you know Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth?

I had heard him preach at the mass meetings. We told him, "We were scared of you, Reverend Fred." He was the most courageous person we'd ever heard of. People were scared of confrontation, but he was fearless. He believed the Lord put him on the earth for that cause and that the Lord would protect him if he would move forward with his goal of freedom for all people. He was on a religious pilgrimage. He had faith that what he was doing was right and faith that he would be protected. He always said the Lord gave him a hard head. He met with us quite often when Dick Arrington appointed the team to plan the institute. He helped convince the footsoldiers that what we were planning would be respectful of them. Mayor Arrington asked us to build something to commemorate what those brave folks did. I would not have been a member of the president's staff at The University of Alabama had it not been for these heroes. We owe a special debt to the people who were so courageous back then.

What do you remember about September 15, 1963, the day the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church was bombed?

I can remember September 15, 1963, 10:22 to 10:30 a.m., as clear as day. My church, the First Congregational Church, was a couple of miles north of Sixteenth Street. I was on my way to church. I usually taught Sunday school but not that day. I was headed to our 11 o'clock service and heard some kind of noise. But it was customary to hear noises in the black neighborhoods all the time. There were sporadic bombs and firecrackers in several sections of town including the Titusville community where I lived. I got to church just before 11 o'clock, and a phone call came in from family members indicating there had been a bombing at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Since it was a large church, everyone knew members there. One of my neighbors was a member and was in the church at the

The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

time. The minister at First Congregational announced that there had been a very serious bombing at Sixteenth Street. Then during the service, another phone call came in confirming the deaths.

I knew the families of three of the girls. Claude Wesley had been my history teacher. He taught me Negro history in high school. His daughter Cynthia was killed. I knew both of Carole Robertson's parents. Her father had been the band teacher at the elementary school I had attended. I knew Chris McNair and his wife and their daughter Denise, who was killed. Early in his career, he was the milk man in our neighborhood. I didn't know the Collins family.

What effect did the bombing have on the morale of the movement?

It was a sad moment. I remember the sadness especially because that summer I had attended the March on Washington in August and had come back to Birmingham believing that maybe things in the Civil Rights movement were going to be brighter. After having heard Martin Luther King and his speech, after having been in that festive, multiracial atmosphere, I had come back to start school. School had opened the week before the bombing, and one of my former students was the first black to go to an interracial high school in Birmingham. I thought things were turning around, but when that bombing happened, I think all of us had a deep, sickening feeling.

You have a beautiful name. What is its origin?

I'm the third person in my family with the name Odessa, but I never found out how it started. It's a Ukranian port city, of course. Woolfolk is Welsh. ❖

"Birmingham has turned the corner because of what happened here."

Reverend Abraham Woods

Odessa Woolfolk earned a B.A. degree in history and political science from Talladega College, an M.A. in urban studies from Occidental College, and completed additional graduate studies in political science at The University of Chicago and at Yale University as a National Urban Fellow.

She held senior-level positions with the Urban Reinvestment Task Force in Washington, D.C.; the New York State Urban Development Corporation; the YWCA of Utica, New York; and the Arbor Hill Community Center and Inter-Racial Council of Albany, New York. She served as executive director of the Birmingham Opportunity Industrialization Center and associate executive director of the Jefferson County Committee for Economic Development in Alabama.

For ten years, she directed the Center for Urban Affairs at The University of Alabama in Birmingham. She also served as assistant to the president for community relations at UAB.

Upon her retirement, UAB established the Odessa Woolfolk Presidential Community Service Award. The mayor and city council of Birmingham selected her as an inductee into the Gallery of Distinguished Citizens. And in 1999, the board of directors of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute named the Odessa Woolfolk Gallery in her honor.

Odessa Woolfolk stands in front of the institute's Birmingham jail cell exhibition from which Dr. King wrote "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

"TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND THE SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT OF THE HUMAN SOUL"

THE BARTER THEATRE LEGEND

By BARBARA CARLISLE

Mark Dawidziak quotes the *Big Stone Gap Post* (below) in his 1982 book *The Barter Theatre Story*. Arts editor for *The Bristol Herald Courier* and critic and entertainment writer for *The Kingsport Times-News*, Dawidziak was well acquainted with the legend the Barter had become when he set out to write his account. He interviewed former actors, playwrights, technicians, and townspeople, and the story is inevitably the same: Barter Theatre was the creation of Robert Porterfield. He imagined it. He drove it. He told endless stories about it—to anyone who would listen—and he crafted its legendary role in the American theatre scene.

Anyone who has picked up a Barter brochure knows the basic tale. In the summer of 1933, Porterfield, discouraged with the devastation of Broadway wrought by the Depression, organized a troupe of New York actors to come to his hometown of Abingdon, Virginia, and do plays in exchange for food. "With vegetables you cannot sell you can buy a good laugh," read the posters. After softening up the locals by marching his cast to the Presbyterian church on Sunday morning and raising the rafters with their booming Broadway voices, he filled the Opera House seats and the company larder on opening night.

Yet it wasn't so simple or unorganized. Porterfield was a master strategist. In the summer of 1931 he had lectured at Emory & Henry College and subsequently produced a play with E & H students, touring it to six other towns in the area. During that summer and the next, he laid the groundwork with the town for the free use of the Opera House, originally a church but more recently the city hall, and he arranged with the abandoned Mary Washington College to house actors for free, the Depression having finished the school.

Porterfield was already twenty-eight. He had literally put on plays in his barn as a boy and continued his passion for theatre in high school, but his father, manager of a 20,000-acre farm in Saltville, insisted on college to prepare for the ministry. Two years into Hampden-Sydney, Porterfield made a trip to Richmond and saw a production of *Rosemarie* at the Lyric Theatre. He went back to school, wrote an ap-

"Not only will actors benefit from a summer in Virginia but the towns nearby will have Broadway brought to their very doors."
Big Stone Gap Post

Bob Porterfield (left) did it all, including mounting road signs. Photos courtesy Barter Theatre archives.

plication for the American Academy of Dramatic Art in New York, and, once accepted, never looked back. Except, of course, he did. Porterfield's list of New York credits is respectable for a young actor but not impressive. He had a dozen roles on Broadway over his career, mostly bit parts, and if his stories are to be believed, his lingering western Virginia accent may have gotten him laughs, but lost him jobs.

Just as the Depression was really sinking in, he was cast in a tour of *Cyrano* with Walter Hampden. The tour collapsed midway. Porterfield says he got his idea of bartering on the train heading home, seeing fields full of wheat and farmers with vegetables but no market. Could he figure out a way to bring them together? Barter plays for food? He and "The Actors Dinner Club" were already eating a lot of free meals in the basement of Union Methodist Church. Some of these actors would become his Barter troupe, though he tells, in an unprinted autobiography, that they were very hard to convince. Going out to Moss Hart's new venture in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, was one thing, but who ever heard of Abingdon, Virginia?

American theatre meant New York, and anything that didn't happen in New York, or near New York, or where New Yorkers could see and hear about it, was simply non-existent. Porterfield was wholly of this mindset. His mission was to bring New York Theatre to Virginia, with New York actors and New York playwrights—or British and a smattering of classic—and he was convinced it would be good for them.

The Actors Stage Relief Committee turned him down for travel money but gave him its blessing. He did persuade Equity to let actors work for food, and The Dramatists Guild to accept barter for royalties. Hume Cronyn, who worked in Abingdon the second summer and again the fourth, says of Porterfield, "He was a natural political figure who knew how to persuade." Cronyn brought some friends and a little money to the second summer, which Porterfield remembers as more difficult to put together than the first one, but he was committed to his mission.

The Barter Theatre was founded by Robert Porterfield during the Depression of 1932.

The original idea of the Barter Theatre was to bring together the hungry actor and the farmer with a surplus of produce.

The Barter Theatre serves as a nonprofit education and cultural experiment for the purpose of giving the people of Virginia and its many guest tourists an opportunity to observe some of the works of the world's most distinguished playwrights performed by competent artists.

The Barter Theatre pledges itself to combat the evils that would destroy the culture and enlightenment of the world, by giving the best of its strength and devotion to the cause of truth, beauty, and the spiritual nourishment of the human soul.

That sign appears on the Barter and expresses Porterfield's passion. What it doesn't express is the complexity of Porterfield's idea of a regional theatre, a concept that won him a Tony in 1948. Porterfield was a founding member of the League of Regional Theatres and of Theatre Communications Group, both organized in the 1960s to assist the emerging professional regional theatre movement. Barter is often cited as one of America's first regional theatres, and with his triumphal achievement of getting Barter Theatre named, in 1946, The State Theatre of Virginia, Porterfield genuinely hoped to be creating a national model. He had enlisted Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt as a patron and sponsor of a production of *Bury the Dead*. She was a sometime resident in Abingdon and she lent her support to the state theatre idea on several critical occasions.

Porterfield wanted to take plays to people. From the very first summer on, The Barter Theatre company toured a fifty- to seventy-mile radius, returning to Abingdon to spend the night and prepare the next show. The first season there were seven plays. By 1937 Barter was feeding ninety people in the company, organized in separate troupes with each mounting shows in repertory. That summer they did a total of seventeen plays and the company buses traveled 6,000 miles. All who remember those days speak of exhaustion, hard work, and learning a great deal about the art and craft of theatre. That was also the year Barter Theatre made the first of a three-year sequence of New York appearances.

Porterfield took the plays *Everyman* and *Two Angry Women* from Abingdon to the auditorium of the New School of Social Science. New Yorkers could barter their tickets, and it was a promotional triumph, with coverage in *The New York Times*, *Time* magazine, and even *The London Times*. By 1939 Porterfield had appeared on radio shows hosted by Fred Allen and Rudy Vallee, and he had achieved the height of theatrical tribute, a Hirschfeld car-

toon depicting him in the lobby of his theatre with audience members trading farm products for tickets.

The Barter Awards were initiated that same year. Barter invited New York's theatre community to a luncheon— they paid for their own tickets—and gave out an award for that year's outstanding contribution to American Theatre. His hook? Eleanor Roosevelt presented the award. Laurette Taylor was the first winner, and the prize—the genius of Porterfield at work again—was a Virginia ham, presented on a platter designed with the Barter emblem by the Cumbow China Decorating Company of Abingdon. Hams, already given as royalties to playwrights, were the natural stuff of theatre jokes and led to quotes and photo ops. The story was that they were directly descended from a sow that had been bartered for admission the first year. The Barter prize also included the right to select two aspiring young artists for a summer season at the theatre. A very young Gregory Peck was a winner in 1940. He was fond of telling how he arrived and had to learn over a hundred lines of dialogue overnight. Like many alumni, he regarded that summer of hard work as an important foundation for his career.

It was an important foundation for Porterfield's career as well. World War II closed Barter in 1942, and at least 125 Barter alumni served in the army. Porterfield, who was already thirty-six when the war started, wasn't drafted until 1944 and spent most of his time in a stateside film unit. At war's end he made his way to Hollywood, where Peck got him into *The Yearling*. He made some money in small roles in big films—*Sergeant York*, for example—but good friends persuaded him to return to Abingdon where he could do something important, rather than hang around Hollywood where he would be one face in thousands.

Back in Abingdon, Porterfield's original passions were rekindled. The city fathers gave him a ten-year free lease on the Opera House—one they had reneged on before the war when a movie theatre wanted the space and Barter went to a building on the grounds of the former Stonewall Jackson Institute. Meanwhile a 1944 tornado had ripped walls off the institute buildings. But with Porterfield's movie earnings, he bought and repaired what became dormitory and construction space, and the city paid half the cost of a necessary addition to the Opera House. City fathers also helped raise the other half. With hundreds of contributions of goods, labor, and actual cash from townspeople and supporters, the Barter was back in business by 1946. Admission was mostly on a cash basis, but the box office still bartered with a few old standby customers.

Designated The State Theatre of Virginia in 1946, Barter grew, extending its tours, adding children's plays, building a second stage, and augmenting its own legend. When Porterfield heard The Empire Theatre in New York was going under the wrecking ball in 1953, he made a phone call and was told he could have anything in it he wanted if he could haul it out over the weekend. He commandeered a squadron of New York-based Barter alumni and convinced an Abingdon hauler to bring trucks to take the loot to Virginia. Lighting instruments, seats, paneling, curtains, and paintings came from New York City to Abingdon. The story goes that at the opening of the newly appointed theatre, the owner of the trucking company was so impressed he shredded the bill.

Porterfield always knew of the lure of fame and greasepaint and never hesitated to surround himself with luminaries. Arm in arm with Mrs. Wendell Wilkie, he tossed a suitcase full of Barter press notices from all around the country onto the floor of the Virginia House of Delegates to punctuate his request for a raise in the Barter subsidy.

He once paid the company in gold coins to prove to the merchants of Abingdon that his troupe had a positive economic impact on the town. He then watched as the coins showed up in grocery, drug, and dry goods stores all the next week.

The State Theatre of Virginia bus parked outside the Barter dormitory. Photo circa 1950.

The technical and artistic level of production support—costumes, scenery, lighting—grew steadily in the 1950s and '60s. About half the audience consisted of tourists. The Highlands Festival, an annual arts event Porterfield helped create, boosted Barter attendance and helped all local artists and merchants. Porterfield's ties with New York theatre remained solid. Barter produced several new works by important playwrights in preparation for New York productions. A nine o'clock daily train from Abingdon to New York meant that critics and journalists could easily make the journey.

The theatre's auditions were well attended and yielded strong companies—apprentices, interns, and full Equity members. Ernest Borgnine spent five years at Barter after getting out of the army and deciding he was too old to go back to school. A revival of Tennessee Williams's *Glass Menagerie* featured him as "The Gentleman Caller," and New York critics out to view the new production helped launch his movie career. Teenage Patricia Neal, growing up in Knoxville, persuaded a friend to get her a summer apprenticeship at Barter. Ned Beatty learned his trade at Barter and shows up in Shakespearean costume shots.

In 1949 Porterfield involved Barter in The American National Theatre and Academy, an effort by a group of arts patrons to create an alternative to Broadway commercialism in American theatre. Though it was established under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, it didn't get going until after the war when Porterfield joined with another veteran, Robert Breen, to mount a production of *Hamlet* with Breen in the title role. The gimmick was to take the play on a government-subsidized tour to postwar Europe. Although Barter mounted and cast the show, when it came time to put the tour together, Breen and others were convinced they needed some "name" players and they recast. The tour went on and Barter has all the fancy literature that was produced as a result, but the whole venture seems to have left a bad taste in the mouth of Porterfield, who determined to keep his future theatrical ventures more tightly under his own control.

As Barter grew in the 1960s and '70s, two things were happening in American theatre. Sparked in 1963 by The Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, other cities were establishing their own regional theatre companies. Some, like Paper Mill Playhouse and McCarter Theatre at Princeton, evolved out of long-standing summer stock companies or production houses. Some, like The Kentucky Repertory Theatre, were founded by local people; others, like Roanoke's Mill Mountain Theatre, were founded by New Yorkers looking for a theatrical home with a steady base. For all of them under union contracts—to which they all aspired in order to have access to new scripts and a cadre of trained professionals—actors were auditioned in New York or Chicago and playwrights had New York agents.

With the help of national organizations—the Foundation for the Extension and Development of the American Professional Theater, sponsored by Actors Equity, the League of Regional Theatres, and Theatre Communications Group—regional theatres were given practical assistance in everything from production management to Equity contracts. As a founding member of both LORT and TCG, Porterfield was happy to share his experience, and he never lost his vision for a network of state theatres across the entire country.

In 1965 the new National Endowment for the Arts became a supporter of regional theatres, on its own and through state councils. Teams of reviewers sent out through the NEA affirmed the quality of local work. There is no question that there was an intentional consistency. A look at play lists, including Barter, quickly reveals that the repertoire of all these theatres was essentially the same—last year's Broadway hits, classics, golden oldies. A season in Kentucky looked like a season in Michigan or San Diego. The two big theatre publishing houses, Samuel French and Dramatics

Bob Porterfield feeds the Barter sow and her piglets.

Publishing, would consider a script only after a New York production. Everybody had their hands on the same material and nothing else was being considered.

But these were also decades of social change in America, and deep within the Civil Rights movement there was also a theatre movement. Probably most famous is *Teatro Campesino*, a troupe organized in 1965 in Delano, California, by Luis Valdez, using a form of improvisational and scripted theatre to build support for farm workers' rights. In New Orleans John O'Neil founded the New Orleans Free Southern Theatre. While he was creating political work among African American artists, another group was forming in Whitesburg, Kentucky, around Appalachian culture. Appalshop was founded in 1969 as "a multi-disciplinary rural arts center distributing radio, film, theater and video that comes out of the culture and concerns of the twenty million people living in the thirteen states of the Appalachian region," as its website states. In 1975 Appalshop, through its Roadside Theatre, launched its first full-scale theatrical production, *Red Fox/Second Hanging*, a story of the arrival of the first coal and timber industrialists in the region.

Appalshop and Roadside centered their work on local stories, local artists, storytelling techniques, and indigenous music. They also worked to bring theatre to Appalachian audiences not usually found in the professional theatre houses, including audiences with low incomes and audiences with minimal formal education. At the same time they maintained a standard of performance and writing that appealed to the most highly educated and informed audience. When John Sayles filmed *Matewan* in 1986, he cast several Roadside actors. By 1980 they were touring a full-scale musical work. With the creation of *Pine Mountain Trilogy*, a story of six generations of an Appalachian family, they became invitees to international theatre festivals. In the early 1990s Roadside began a collaboration with John O'Neil's company, *Junebug*, of New Orleans.

In 1972, director Bob Leonard of Washington, D.C., joined with artists from Johnson City, Tennessee, to form The Road Company there. Musicians Ed Snodderly and Eugene Wolf and playwright Jo Carson were among the members of the company who created original ensemble work based on the history and culture of Northeast Tennessee. They played at The Down Home, a Johnson City "picking parlor," as well as on the road. They created more than two dozen works from 1972 to 1998.

Another theatre, uniquely Appalachian in its material and performance style, is Lime Kiln, in Lexington, Virginia. It was founded in 1983 by Don Baker, a 1968 Washington and Lee University graduate who was influenced by what Appalshop was doing as well as by Peter Schumann's radical anti-Vietnam Bread and Puppet Theatre. Lime Kiln is best exemplified by its legendary *Stonewall Country*, an irreverent and yet poignant telling of the Stonewall Jackson story, with a storyteller narrator and songs by Robin and Linda Williams. Lime Kiln has used giant puppets, fireworks, stories, and songs in the rendering of everything from Shakespeare to folktales. Baker approached theatre as if his audience had no expectation of what was supposed to be, and therefore anything that worked in his outdoor, rugged environment was legitimate.

None of this was in Barter's world. Lulu Vollmer's North Carolina play *Sun Up* had already enjoyed Broadway success before Porterfield took it to Abingdon. He delighted New Yorkers with the "Hillbilly Romeo and Juliet" from the 1937 season and toured five states in the title role of *The Virginian*. But these were New York versions of Appalachia.

When Porterfield died suddenly of a heart attack in 1971, his successor, Rex Partington, was equally caught up in the national standard repertoire. Partington had been a New York stage manager and occasional actor. In the 1950s Partington spent two years at Barter. He had been in Minneapolis working with Guthrie producer Peter Zeisler and then at Cleveland Play-

A 1967 Barter production of You Can't Take it With You.

house before returning to Abingdon as production manager the year Porterfield died. He was strongly committed to the idea of a resident company and to professionalism in the theatre. He does not seem to have had any special interest in Appalachia right up until his retirement in 1992.

In some respects Abingdon reinforces that. Although surrounded by rural Appalachia, Abingdon has been a town center for two centuries. It housed wealthy lumbermen and two colleges. It had banks and lawyers. It had the apparatus of county government, and as one of the few routes to the west over the mountains, it was a place for hotels, inns, and shopkeepers, and a constant flow of outsiders. Today it is a charming arts and crafts center marketing itself as a 200-year-old town with much of its pre-Civil War architecture intact. Barter Theatre has helped make the town a tourist destination.

Meanwhile, however, sparked in part by Roadside, Lime Kiln, and The Road Company, true regional awareness slowly crept into the world of LORT and TCG. In the late 1980s, Cincinnati Playhouse produced local playwright Tom Atkinson's *Clear Liquor and Coal Black Nights*, a piece structured as four tales told after a mountain funeral. It was a solo venture then but had promise for the future. Also in the '80s, Kentucky Rep produced three of Kentucky writer Sallie Bingham's plays in three different regular seasons. Tennessee playwright Jo Carson's work began to show up as a regular feature of her state's major theatres. Regional artistic directors began, if timidly, to take a chance on what was in front of them, instead of requiring New York's prior approval.

Today, Barter's artistic director, Richard Rose, is keenly aware of and in tune with the need for development of material from and about Appalachia as part of his mission. Barter's Appalachian Plays Festival is now in its ninth year. Barter still auditions actors in New York but holds regional auditions as well. In a nice morphing of spirit, the Barter company presently includes original Road Company member Eugene Wolf.

Audiences who attend The International Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee, or The Galax Fiddlers Convention in Virginia by the thousands might be surprised at the idea that what is now sought after and treasured by a large constituency was once valued only by a committed few. But a cultural evolution has taken place in Appalachia.

It is a big step for a regional theatre to grow up and stop looking over its shoulder to New York, to recognize that its own narratives have a place beside Neil Simon's Manhattan or Tennessee Williams's dying Deep South. Appalachia's stories had to struggle to reach the stage, and it took people who had separated themselves from the sweep of American regional theatre to develop true regional voices. It was not Bob Porterfield who imagined a place for Appalachia in theatre, but it was his imagination that continuously kept alive an institution in Appalachia where theatre would flourish. And in doing so, in maintaining that legend, he provided a place where eventually the region would have a voice alongside all those others. ❖

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Dr. Barbara Carlisle is professor of theatre emerita at Virginia Tech University, where she taught playwriting, acting, and graduate seminars in arts management. She has directed and choreographed in professional, community, and educational theatre for forty-five years.

INNER PEACE AND PATIENCE: ON GUIDING ADOLESCENTS

By KATEY SCHULTZ

"Is that a school for 'troubled kids'?" a distant cousin asked me at a family reunion. She had been teaching in the public school system for over thirty years. The last time we saw each other I was teaching in the New York state public schools for AmeriCorps.

"My life is very different now," I explained. "The Arthur Morgan School isn't for troubled kids. It's more like a community-based school for teens." Our conversation was not very long, as I found myself stumbling over my own words, trying to explain the complexities of a forty-five-year-old, staff-run school that isn't officially Montessori but well—what is it?

It took several more years and the completion of my Montessori Adolescent Guide certification before I felt I could finally begin to answer this question sufficiently.

In 2005, Arthur Morgan School became a certified Montessori learning environment according to Montessori Educational Programs International. This certification does not designate AMS as an "official" Montessori school. Rather, it ensures that the school has the materials, physical space, and capabilities to prepare an authentic Montessori learning environment, and it is currently doing so.

At present, eleven out of twenty-nine enrolled students have previously attended Montessori schools. One staff member is Montessori-certified, and several others graduated with degrees in education. All demonstrate a commitment to experiential education, a passion for the outdoors, a deep concern and care for teens, and a willingness to participate in the important work of living in community. The staff and student contracts are formed around the same tri-pillar philosophy: respect yourself, respect others, and respect the environment.

The non-profit private school, nestled on approximately one hundred acres at the base of the Black Mountains in western North Carolina, is a boarding school for grades seven, eight, and nine. When the students arrive, the first week is spent in orientation followed by a three-day backpacking trip and contract-signing ceremony. Returning students teach new students about chores, morning sing, announcements, campus trails, sharing care packages, choosing

classes and electives, taking care of the chickens, the various techniques for chopping wood, and many other school traditions.

The schedule fluctuates to accommodate trips and guest speakers, but in general, teachers work with students individually and in small groups on language, math, science, social studies, and internships four mornings a week. The fifth morning is reserved for work projects to help maintain the grounds and involve students in the school's administration. In addition to free time outdoors, every Tuesday afternoon, staff and students sign up for a two-hour activity period, which could be anything from a creek walk to a staff-student soccer game to quilting. On Wednesdays, students voice their opinions at a student-clerked All School Meeting, and special amendments are made to the afternoon schedule to allow for advisement—an opportunity for one staff member to share a meal, discussions, and outings with the same two students every week for the entire school year.

Weekends are spent relaxing, working outdoors, doing laundry and homework, and the occasional house outing or trip to the grocery store. After a few weeks, each house takes on its own character and runs like a well-oiled machine. Family-style cabins and two houseparents per four or five teens allow for closeness and individual attention to all aspects of students' developing lives.

The *Erdkinder*, or "land children," philosophy developed by Dr. Maria Montessori is reserved for adolescents because it meets their needs and characteristics holistically. Adolescence, says Montessori, is a time of emotional, social, physical, and spiritual upheaval. What adolescents need most is a safe place away from the family to develop self-confidence and experience their own relevance in a miniature model of society. Boarding schools can be safety nets for an adolescent's learning experience because teens seeking to separate themselves from their childhood roles can do so constructively, in a home away from home. Mentors are of the utmost importance as well, so careful attention is given to living arrangements on campus. A community-oriented school that provides opportunities for real work and contribution becomes crucial to the moral and intellectual development of the "social newborn." Indeed, any staff member at AMS would tell you that without the students, the community could not maintain itself. They are the lifeblood of those one hundred acres, as much as the water that tumbles down the mountain streams.

Adolescence, says Montessori, is a time of emotional, social, physical, and spiritual upheaval.

In her "*Erdkinder*" essay, Montessori offers the basic outline of the adolescent program. But she cautions educators, reminding them that, "It is impossible to fix *a priori* a detailed program for study and work. We can only give the general plan. This is because the program should only be drawn up gradually under the guidance of experience."

Arthur Morgan School has decades of experience with teens to draw upon, and the teachers honor that with integrity. Each school year they gather for orientation around a campfire where they share the story of how the school began. Teachers describe the broad influences on the school: Quaker principles, the teachings of Gandhi, Johann Pestalozzi, John Dewey, and others.

While I could not adequately portray the philosophy of the school at my family reunion, I did find a chance to talk about it one year later at a Montessori luncheon in Houston, Texas. It was day six of an annual AMS eighteen-day service field trip. Nine students and three teachers (including myself) spent the night at the School of the Woods en route to southern Texas. This happened to coincide with Aline Wolf's visit to Houston, and I was invited to attend her speech and eat lunch with her the next day, where we had an opportunity to discuss the school.

Wolf, author of several books including *Nurturing the Spirit* (a required text for my certi-

fication), has been able to channel Montessori's message of peace and inspire teachers with practical methods. Her work encourages teachers to merge peace and education as suggested decades ago by Montessori herself.

In the short time Wolf and I had together, a spiritual connection formed that carried me through the remainder of the rigorous field trip. Her speech at the luncheon emphasized the preciousness of each child's learning experience, describing how important it is for children to have teachers and parents in their lives that are spiritually aware, intentional, and patient. After talking to her, I could tell she fully understood the work of a community-oriented school. She understood the value of the farm-like setting and the need for teens to be away from home. She did not ask me what "type" of students I taught. And I understood that, in her eyes, all of this work was relevant to the peace movement in education. I began to see that, among Montessorians, the work that the Arthur Morgan School was doing played an important role in the evolution of adolescent education.

With Wolf's echoes of peace still in my ear, the remainder of the service trip turned out to be a life-changing experience. The climax was arriving at Refugio del Rio Grande, just a few miles from the U.S.-Mexico border. Although the students had never been there, the anticipation was thick. They had heard from their peers who visited Refugio previously, and they knew they were on the cusp of change.

We spent one week doing work on the land in exchange for our stay at the humble refugee camp. The plan was to study border patrol issues, the effects of NAFTA on border town neighborhoods and factories, and immigration law. In addition, we were blessed by the profound stories that the co-founder of Refugio, Sr. Pio Celestino, shared with us. He introduced us to a refugee family that cooked a gigantic feast for our entire group. That night, around the sizzling grill with Mexican radio music playing in the background, my students traded jokes with the teenage children of this refugee family. I remember watching them through the grayness of dusk as they laughed together, kicking up dust and sharing Fanta soda beverages, trying to teach one another words in Spanish and English. Peace, I thought, *paz*. Peace is without borders.

The next morning we traveled to the Border Patrol office in Harlingen, Texas. The students were full of questions.

"Why does the United States spend so much money trying to keep people out?" one wondered.

"Why do so many people want to come here?" asked another.

Drew, a ninth grader, asked, "How difficult is it to become a Border Patrol Agent?"

On our way to the surveillance room, Cate, an eighth grader from Atlanta (though adopted from Honduras), tugged my sleeve.

"Did you see the refugees in that cell?" she asked. I nodded. "I wonder what their story is. I wonder if we have the same roots." I glanced down and saw that her gaze was distant and calm. She, along with the others, was very deep in thought.

"Where is the border?" one student asked, pointing to the television screens. Indeed, there was no visible line.

The next day we spent a leisurely morning with Scott O'Keefe at Refugio. We ate homemade pancakes and talked about our experience in Harlingen. Scott, a peace activist and retired professor from Berkeley who was in his eighties at the time, had made a tradition of spending his winters at Refugio. He was aware that in a few hours we were going to cross the border into Mexico and take the students to see the border town culture and the devastation of the neighborhoods and factories that largely depend on U.S.-owned companies. At our community meeting that morning, he told us that our work was very important.

"The fact that you are going to cross that border and meet people face to face, that very fact alone, makes the border less powerful," he said. The students grew quiet and listened care-

fully. I did, too. "You are doing very important work. Someday later on you will look at someone of Mexican descent with very different eyes. You will understand more and have a gentler heart. It is important for you to go to Mexico, and it is important for Mexicans to see you in their country."

As we packed the van for our first excursion across the border, Scott called out to us from the porch, "There are no real borders. They don't exist anywhere. See what you can see."

What I saw, as a teacher and participant on that trip, was the indispensable role of the guide in an adolescent's education. The concept of "guiding" became so utterly clear to me as we walked the streets of Matamores, that it was as if all my Montessori training had prepared me for this moment. It was not my job to explain every political and cultural detail of the border town to these students. It was not my job to filter any advice or messages we received from Pio, the refugee family, the Border Patrol agent, or Scott. I was merely a chaperone, watching out for their safety and well-being, showing them another part of the world from which they could draw their own conclusions. The students were, in fact, teaching themselves through a process of experiencing and questioning, thinking, and choosing.

Once I realized this, I knew I had changed as an educator. By guiding I was assisting them in their learning. It required a certain sort of inner peace and patience in order to trust this process, and Wolf's insights on spiritual awareness came back to me, stronger than ever before.

Toward the end of the week, the students shared some of their reflections during a community meeting at Refugio.

"It was really sad to see the different ways people have to live just because it's a few miles across the border," said Cosima, a ninth-grade student from Charleston, South Carolina.

"But I don't understand why they can't make the same wages as people who work in U.S. factories, like the one in Micaville near AMS," one wondered. We watched a documentary, *Mirando El Sol*, which helped answer some of these questions.

"Today I learned how to barter!" Eric, an eighth grader, said. "*Cuanto cuesta*?" he smiled broadly and held up small gifts he had purchased for his family.

The students were, in fact, teaching themselves through a process of experiencing and questioning, thinking, and choosing.

Montessori's life and work taught me about the profound connection between the learning environment and the child, the choices offered and the choices made. Teaching and living at Arthur Morgan School allowed me to put that understanding to work. AMS may not be an official Montessori school, but the crux of Montessori philosophy and the heart of AMS are undeniably similar. Both bear heavy weight on the needs and characteristics of the adolescent. Both agree that learning environment plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's education. And both emphasize the peaceful, non-intrusive role of the guide within that environment. Even when we weren't traveling, my students and I were able to develop a rapport that seemed so essential to their trust in our community, that I was easily convinced of Montessori's insistence that adolescents need to move away from home as they enter the third plane of development. And the more I studied the *Erdkinder* model, the more convinced I became that AMS was modeling it and, in some cases, hitting the nail on the head.

Montessori was and continues to be an influential voice in the face of many of society's challenges. As Montessorians, I like to think we share a common goal: to provide excellent, fair, and experiential education alongside a peaceful ethic of living that is modeled by individuals and by the order of the environment itself.

As Montessori said, "The teachers must have the greatest respect for the young personality, realizing that in the soul of the adolescent, great values are hidden, and that in the minds of these boys and girls, there lies all our hope of future progress and the judgment of our times."

And to what end will today's progress carry our future? By guiding, by learning, by loving, one child at a time, one can only hope: to peace, to peace, to peace. ❖

Source: Montessori, Maria. *From Childhood to Adolescence*. New York: Schocken Books, 1976.

Katey Schultz, former core teacher and houseparent at the Arthur Morgan School, currently assists part-time in the Spruce Pine Montessori School in North Carolina.

Oshanar

(1842?—1913)

By ELIZABETH HOWARD

O-she-an-ar, Oshe Annie, Ocie,
I answered to all of them,
but not to squaw girl.
My Chickasaw mother taught me
to meet scorn with my head up,
my history proud,
my heritage honorable.

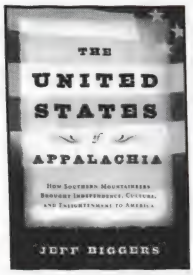
I remember the long hard journey
from Virginia to Tennessee,
the wagon jolting over mountains.
It seemed we'd travel forever.
Firstborn, I had to help with Lorance
who cried day and night.
We slept in the forest,
in fresh-cleared fields,
under blankets in the wagon.
Mama had packed clay jars
and rivercane baskets with food.
As we went along, she gathered
berries, nuts, greens, roots,
and Papa trapped, hunted,
and fished for our meat.

We rejoiced when we came
to our new home
on the Caney Fork River.

Papa sashayed around the fire,
feet pattering out fancy steps,
and Mama joined him,
stomping to a different rhythm.
We danced, too, a wild dance,
Chickasaw and British
all mixed up like our blood.

I married British, Chickasaw
blood thinner in my children,
thinner each generation,
French, German, Scots, Irish,
and unforeseen races mixed in.
It bothered me to look for Chickasaw,
but see fair skin, red hair, blue eyes.
I was gathering poke sallet
by the river when it come to me.
Generation after generation,
Chickasaw blood will flow
in our veins, just as the Caney Fork
flows into the Cumberland,
the Cumberland into some other river,
on and on till it's all mixed
up in the ocean,
nobody knowing
which river is which.

Elizabeth Howard lives in Crossville, Tennessee. She writes both poetry and fiction. Her work has been published in *Xavier Review, Cold Mountain Review, Comstock Review, Wind, Poem, Appalachian Heritage, Appalachian Journal, The Licking River Review, The Distillery, Big Muddy*, and other journals. She has published two books of poetry, *Anemones (Grandmother Earth*, 1998) and *Gleaners* (Grandmother Earth, 2005).



The United States of Appalachia: How Southern Mountaineers Brought Independence, Culture, and Enlightenment to America
By Jeff Biggers

Shoemaker & Hoard
Emoryville, California, 2006
$26.00 (hardcover), 288 pages

In this affectionate tribute to "one of the most maligned and misunderstood" regions in America, author Jeff Biggers describes how, in the summer of 1983, Appalachian radical Don West piled him down with books, forcing the young hitchhiker "to consider the . . . hidden histories and stories" of the land of his ancestors. The well-researched (though imperfect) result of Biggers's long years of study, *The United States of Appalachia: How Southern Mountaineers Brought Independence, Culture, and Enlightenment to America*, lends weight to West's insistence that to understand America we must first understand Appalachia.

Admittedly, some of Biggers's most convincing examples of Appalachia's influence on American politics and culture include the now oft-acknowledged: the Watauga Association, the battles of Kings Mountain in North Carolina and Blair Mountain in West Virginia, the region's significance in the complex history of American "roots" music, as well as the role white Appalachians played in setting to motion the Abolition and Civil Rights movements. (Don West wrote passionately of the latter.)

But Biggers's study ultimately takes on a life of its own. He argues that Appalachia has served as a "vanguard" precisely because, from the earliest days of European conquest, the region has been characterized by shifting realities, contradictions, and conflicts, which have forced its people to develop admirable skills of improvisation in the face of seismic change.

Because, to his credit, Biggers does not narrowly define the region's people by race or ethnicity, he is able to trace his thesis from Sequoyah (and, in fact, from the Cherokee in general, to whom the patriots of Kings Mountain were indebted for the means of warfare that ensured their great success); and because he considers urban Appalachia as authentic as the rural, he can stress not only the region's influence on American "roots" music but upon American jazz.

Thus, Biggers reclaims for Appalachia many of her neglected or trouble-making children. They range from the defiantly secular (the muck-raking early nineteenth century writer Anne Royall, who saw the rise of evangelicalism as the greatest threat to Americans' freedoms) to the privileged and avant-garde (Rebecca Harding Davis, whose haunting and ground-breaking naturalism bore witness to her region's growing industrial reality) to the modern and feminist (the teenaged female millworkers of Elizabethton, Tennessee, who, in 1929, refused to accept poor pay and dangerous working conditions by "shout[ing] down men and march[ing] in rallies in stylish clothes and high heels") to the shamefully disinherited (Martin Delany, who worked toward the creation of a Black Israel, and would write to Frederick Douglass that "it is only in [my own native land of] the mountains that I can fully appreciate my existence as a man in America").

Always interesting (if sometimes overwritten), Biggers's alternative history of the region confounds the usual stereotypes heaped upon it by outsiders. Just as important, Biggers's history takes on the notions of many insiders who continue to insist that the only "authentic" Appalachia is anti-modern, country, poor, or working-class; its true people of Anglo-Saxon or Scots-Irish descent; its only religion fundamentalist; and its home-grown politics uniformly conservative.

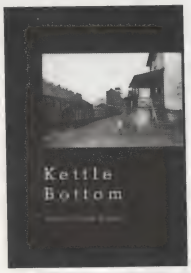
Still, even the most open-minded student of Appalachian history and culture might wonder if Biggers's anecdotal study adds up to an earned conclusion; John Brown, after all, gave mountaineers more credit than deserved on the question of slavery, and it got him hanged. Were East Tennessee's abolitionists so active because they were freedom-loving Appalachians, or because they were members of a conscience-wracked Quaker minority in an area where slavery was more than just a concept? It's a complex question, and Biggers's argument often seems too easy. Anecdotes do not make general truths, and every region of America has produced its iconoclasts and mavericks.

While hardly as authoritative and exhaustive as the recently published *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, this lively and engaging book similarly dignifies an unfairly defamed region and people, and it deserves our attention.

"Southern Appalachians have roamed to the ends of the United States and the rest of the world," Biggers reminds us, "spreading their

traditions and changing the way we live. Beyond their contributions to . . . the American Revolution[,] the abolitionist, labor, and civil rights movements, and literary and musical innovations[,] they have literally peopled the nation." Overall, Biggers's book is thought-provoking and fun to read. ❖

Elizabeth Lamont is associate professor of English at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee, and a descendent of early settlers in the mountains of North Carolina, Virginia, and Kentucky.



Kettle Bottom
By Diane Gilliam Fisher

Perugia Press
Florence, Massachusetts, 2005
$15.00 (paperback), 88 pages

Diane Gilliam Fisher's *Kettle Bottom* tells the bloody story of the West Virginia mine wars of 1920-21, tracing the roots of the conflict to the control the coal companies, as powerful institutions in Appalachia, wielded over every aspect of camp life, from employment and housing to medicine, schools, and trade. Fisher uses the persona poem form to tell these powerful stories from the first-person points of view of the miners and their families, to Italian immigrants, to the mine owners and camp teacher. This 360-degree lens captures a complicated portrait that includes the terrible beauty and devastation of Mingo County.

Presenting these stories from a first-person point of view creates a poetry of witness, capable of conveying the emotional depth and complexity of the people of that place and time. Every voice in this collection has the power not only to move the reader to empathy but also to connect a contemporary reader with the motivations behind the characters' actions.

Persona poems present a unique tension: How will the poet balance her own voice with the persona? Fisher succeeds through her measured use of the West Virginia dialect and skillful application of appropriate diction. Her most memorable characters are two girls, Edith Mae Chapman and Pearlie Webb. Their youth allows Fisher an emotional candor. In the poem "A Reporter from New York Asks Edith Mae Chapman, Age Nine, What Her Daddy Tells Her About the Strike," Edith Mae replies:

We ain't going to meeting and bow our heads
for the company preacher, who claims it is the meek
will inherit the coal fields, instead of telling
how the mountains will crumble and rocks
rain down like fire upon the heads
of the operators, like it says in the Bible.
We ain't to talk to no dirtscum scabs
and we ain't to talk to God. My daddy
is very upset with the Lord.

Edith Mae's father's ideas, as interpreted through his daughter's frank and earnest mouth, are boiled down to their purest essence: a heartbreaking loss of faith. Pearlie, a few years older, is afforded a more sophisticated point of view. She reveals a careful discernment of gender relations and the violence in her community throughout her poems, such as "Pearlie Asks Her Mama What *Poontang* Means":

. . . I am going to the store one more time.
I have not never stole nothing,
nor hardly ever even told a lie, but I have got
to get me a knife. All my life
I have tried so hard to be so good, and now
it is all for naught, for them men,
them men has put murder in my heart.

The violence rumbles to a slow boil through the first section of *Kettle Bottom*, which begins with an autumn mine explosion. The shadow of the coal company looms over every poem and every voice, especially the women and children. Maude Stanley, the wife of a miner, narrates the opening poem on the explosion:

It is true that it is the men that goes in, but it is us
that carries the mine inside. It is us that listens
to what all they are scared of and takes
the weight of it from them, like handing off
a sack of meal. . . .

Maude's testimony introduces the collection's careful attention to the point of view of the coal camp wives and widows, though the men are also given voices.

The middle of the book is anchored by a single long poem, "Raven Light," miner Nathan Stokes's lyric lament of being caught inside the coal mine. The horror of being trapped is palpable and chilling. Thinking he hears the

cry of a mountain lion, Nathan soon realizes the screams are his own. The dark and the damp become characters in the poem, infusing every section with foreboding. Only Nathan's dinner bucket is retrieved from the mine collapse, and his widow, realizing she had "stacked it wrong," turns the bucket upside down, the sign for a strike. And so it begins.

The third section chronicles the bloodshed and loss that follow the miners' strike and the coal company's and the U.S. government's retaliation. The book ends the following summer with the death of a thirteen-year-old miner and the hymn "The Land Where We Never Grow Old" haunting the background.

Fisher's poems bring the violence and humanity of this influential period of Appalachian history to life, one persona at a time. Her generous and emotionally resonant narrative allows us an eyewitness point of view, to a powerful and moving result. ❖

Erin Keane has contributed to *Now & Then* as a book reviewer and is the author of *The One-Hit Wonders*, a poetry chapbook from Snark Publishing. She holds the MFA in writing from Spalding University, teaches at Bellarmine University, and directs the InKY Reading Series in Louisville, Kentucky.

An American Vein: Critical Readings in Appalachian Literature

Edited by Danny L. Miller, Sharon Hatfield, and Gurney Norman

Ohio University Press
Athens, Ohio, 2005
$59.95 (hardcover)
$24.95 (paperback), 400 pages

In the justifiably panned movie *The Dukes of Hazzard*, one of the Duke boys, on being called a redneck, says he prefers to be called Appalachian American. I guess it is indicative of the general wasteland of the movie that this comic relief, slight as it is, manifests itself in a witticism that smacks of racism (intended or not). Perhaps a mild dig at African Americans (for preferring any particular appellation to whatever whites want to call them), this quip also implies that being a "redneck" is in some sense tantamount to being a person of color. At the same time, it reminds us that rednecks, too, are at least a kind of American. Anyway, the line from the movie came back to me when I saw the title of Miller, Hatfield, and Norman's anthology of literary criticism. *An American Vein: Critical Readings in Appalachian Literature* reminds readers that Appalachians and other Americans are kin.

And the book lives up to the title. It includes a dozen articles by critics from outside Appalachia analyzing the work of Appalachian authors, and it includes seventeen Appalachian critics seeking to place Appalachian fiction or poetry in the context of literature from the rest of the country, as well as essays that attempt to place work within Appalachian culture. Many of the essays are reprinted from established Appalachian literary institutions such as *Iron Mountain Review, Journal of Kentucky Studies,* and *Appalachian Journal.* Six of the essays are new to this collection.

The editors make a strong effort to represent the diversity of influential writers and works in twentieth century Appalachia, beginning with Harriette Arnow and James Still's generation and continuing through some of today's newer authors, such as Lee Smith and Frank X Walker. All of the essays are interesting. Many are provocative. One is outrageously iconoclastic.

One of the most thought-provoking essays is by Joyce Carol Oates, whose critique is notable for its ambivalent attitude toward Harriette Arnow's *The Dollmaker*. She calls the novel "our most unpretentious American masterpiece," a remark I could have let pass as only odd if she hadn't described the Nevels family's language as "not a means of changing or even expressing reality, but a means of pitifully recording its effect upon the nerves." Her referring to *The Dollmaker* as "not inferior" to Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* seems to damn with faint praise.

More at home with their subjects are the Appalachian critics, who consider Appalachian literary works within the context of the culture. Among the many fine essays of this sort are Danny Miller on Gurney Norman's *Kinfolks*, John Lang on Robert Morgan's poetry, and Jane Gentry Vance on Mary Lee Settle's *Beulah Land*.

The most outrageous essay is Charles H. Daughaday's argument that Jesse Stuart is a better poet than Ezra Pound ("The Changing Poetic Canon: The Case of Jesse Stuart and Ezra Pound"). Stuart is a wonderful storyteller, but some of his poetry is ham-fisted (as pointed out, in so many words, by Dayton Kohler in his essay comparing Jesse Stuart and James Still). Though I vehemently disagree with Daughaday, I found his essay fun to read, partly because he's so exercised about his subject. His

essay illustrates the difficulty of determining what is "good" art.

Theresa Burriss's discussion of Afrilachian poets, like Nikky Finney, is one of the most important essays in the book in fostering interest in diversity and dispelling stereotypes of Appalachia. Also important in this regard is Elizabeth Engelhardt's discussion of the poetry of an earlier African American poet, Effie Lou Waller, from eastern Kentucky.

For me, one of the most wonderful things this collection does is point the way to authors the reader might not have read or even heard of. Rodger Cunningham's essay on fantasy writer John Crowley, for example, details how this contemporary non-Appalachian author portrays Appalachia. Though Cunningham admits the negative stereotypes in Crowley's work, he tries so creatively to justify them and sketches such an intriguing portrait of the novels that I feel compelled to seek out Crowley's books to judge for myself.

Because no book could include every major writer and critic, it is not fair to fuss about who's left out, but—just in case the editors are contemplating a second volume—I miss Wendell Berry, Marilou Awiakta, Charles Wright, Silas House, and Sharyn McCrumb especially, though whether all of them are Appalachian writers depends on the definition. I also miss one of Bob Snyder's essays on Appalachian literature. And, I think the conversation between Gurney Norman and postmodern literary theorist Lance Olsen, published in 1988 in *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*, is still timely.

Among the editors' goals in this critical anthology was to stimulate discussion, and this book certainly will. I hope it finds its way into many classrooms, libraries, and homes in the region and beyond. ❖

Edwina Pendarvis teaches at Marshall University and served for three years as associate editor of the *Journal of Appalachian Studies*. A frequent contributor to *Now & Then,* she currently co-directs the Faces of Appalachia: Studies of Gender and Ethnicity.

Never Seen the Moon: The Trials of Edith Maxwell

By Sharon Hatfield

University of Illinois Press
Urbana, Illinois, 2005
$21.95 (paperback), 287 pages

Young Edith Maxwell, accused of killing her father, perhaps with a high-heeled shoe, perhaps in a more sinister fashion, perhaps not at all, is the main character of this true "who done it" set in the 1930s. The basic facts of the case are not in dispute. Edith Maxwell, "wild" by her father's standards, comes home too late on a Saturday night, an argument ensues, and her strict, often drinking father, Trigg, ends up dead on the kitchen floor. Or on the porch, up against a chopping block. It is a matter of some debate that runs throughout *Never Seen the Moon: The Trials of Edith Maxwell*. In 1935, word of this murder grabbed the imagination of Wise County, Virginia, where the death occurred, and then it grabbed the country's imagination. Neither would let it go until the last drop of drama was wrung out.

Sharon Hatfield, journalist, editor, teacher, and native of Lee County, Virginia, has combined her considerable investigative talents with the gift of a storyteller to put forth this historical account of smalltown sentiments, big city prejudice, the power of the yellow press, and the demands of a national imagination. Ultimately, though, this is the tale of one family's tragedy so skillfully written that it engages the reader like a novel.

Even before the funeral of Trigg Maxwell, questions and suspicions arose as to the circumstances surrounding his death. Edith Maxwell is implicated in his death, and quickly the story reached the attention and interest of publishing tycoon and lurid sensationalist William Randolph Hearst. Other news enterprises soon picked up Maxwell's story and featured it in *The New Yorker, The Washington Post, Time*, and *Newsweek*.

Within months Maxwell's arrest and upcoming trial became a *cause celebre*, with Hearst aiding in her defense for exclusive rights to her story. Ernie Pyle, James Thurber, and Walter Winchell, influential journalists of the time, all weighed in. More than one paper avowed that this trial was as important as the Scopes Trial held in Tennessee a decade earlier.

The occurrence of this murder charge had much to recommend it as a national story. The notion of a young woman accused and tried by men offended women's suffrage groups throughout the Northeast. Great benefits were held in Maxwell's honor to generate funds to aid in her defense. Maxwell was young and attractive; the Appalachian mountain setting appropriately romantic as a backdrop for stereotype and sensationalism. The Hearst organization saw potential and set about creating

even more fodder for its own and other papers and periodicals. Yellow journalism was in full swing, and accuracy of reporting often took a backseat to selling copy. There is an opportunist brother, a young and somber little sister, a bewildered and downtrodden mother, and an entire Greek chorus of attorneys and judges, sheriffs, and jailers with confounding interests and intrigues.

Not only was Edith Maxwell put on trial, but the entire Appalachian region was scrutinized and generally depicted as backward and ignorant of the modern world. Wise County was described by one journalist as "a weird land of howling hound dogs, screeching bobcats and moonshine whiskey, where more than 12 percent of the white population are illiterate." The title of the book comes from one account that "womenfolk" had so few rights, and that Maxwell was so deprived of a normal night life for a woman her age that she had "never seen the moon."

Hatfield makes ample use of her research to illuminate the inaccuracies and gross generalities journalists employed to describe the people and place of Wise County, Virginia. These liberties stand in stark contrast to Hatfield's exacting research and commitment to truth. What is extraordinary is Hatfield's use of detail and research to propel the story and enhance it, while never allowing the reader to get bogged down. Her presentation of this story provides the reader with an encompassing view of a family, a death, a criminal trial, the community and region, and the country's reaction. Often in the telling, questions are left unanswered. Some things cannot be known. Yet Hatfield never attempts to surmise or explain.

Sharon Hatfield has found herself at a convergence of an historical event, the interest and discipline to review hundreds of pounds of documents and court records, the storytelling talent to make magic out of dusty and forgotten clippings, and the University of Illinois Press with the foresight to publish her work. Hatfield and *Never Seen the Moon* have already been given two important Appalachian literary accolades: the 2005 Weatherford Award for Nonfiction and the 2006 Chaffin Award.

This book is of sufficient quality and scholarship that it could be used in journalism courses, family studies, justice and criminology coursework, and certainly in courses and workshops on the craft of writing non-fiction. It belongs in every collection of Appalachian history. But mostly it is a book to read and enjoy for its own sake. This book will hold up to the rapid turning of every page, which this story demands. ❖

Greta McDonough is a freelance feature writer and essayist. She is professor of human services at Owensboro Community and Technical College in Kentucky.

Concert

By ROBERT MORGAN

My uncle at the end of his
long day of labor, wandered to
the edge of the far field around
the hill where, open to the wide
valley, the church was visible,
and as the summer heat was dulled
and shadows ran from post and hedge,
he stopped at his known vantage point
beside a sumac bush, to hear
the steeple bells spill out the call
to a revival service at
the sunset hour, with clear and cool
and sparkling strokes. He stood until
the last note faded dead away,
the only music of his day,
except the keen of whippoorwill.

Robert Morgan's most recent book is *The Strange Attractor: New and Selected Poems,* 2004. He is the author of a new biography of Daniel Boone.

RENFRO VALLEY, THE CARTER FOLD, AND THE DOWN HOME:

PROFILING THREE SHRINES OF LIVE MUSIC IN APPALACHIA

By WAYNE WINKLER

Music venues come and go. Nearly all music fans of a certain age have a memory of a club or hall that hosted many magical nights but has long since closed. Many in the Tri-Cities region of Tennessee recall traveling to P.B. Scott's in Blowing Rock, North Carolina, to hear artists as diverse as Doc Watson and B. B. King. More recently, Ella Guru's in Knoxville presented top-name entertainment. Both, and many more like them, have closed. Presenting live music is a tough business, and the roll call of defunct nightclubs, coffeehouses, and listening rooms grows every month.

Renfro Valley

Despite the high mortality rate, a few music halls have survived and achieved the status of institutions. The Renfro Valley Barn Dance has presented live music in southeastern Kentucky for sixty-seven years. The Carter Family Fold in Hiltons, Virginia, began thirty-two years ago, and The Down Home in Johnson City celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in 2006.

The Renfro Valley Barn Dance has presented some of the top names in traditional country music. The Barn Dance was designed to be a radio program and in the beginning didn't even originate in Renfro Valley. But it quickly settled into the Rockcastle County, Kentucky, location that inspired its creation.

John Lair grew up at the junction of Big Renfro Creek and Little Renfro Creek. After World War I, he moved to Chicago to work for an insurance company. He heard Bradley Kincaid performing mountain songs on WLS radio and became fascinated with the idea of presenting traditional music on the new medium.

Lair left his job to work at WLS, eventually becoming the talent agent for the National Barn Dance. But Lair had a novel idea. He wanted to present traditional music in a rural setting, not a big-city radio studio. And the area he had in mind was his home on Renfro Creek near Mount Vernon, Kentucky.

"It was the first rural show actually performed in a rural area," according to Pete Stamper, an entertainer and author of *It All Happened in Renfro Valley*. "[Renfro Valley] was 125 miles from any radio station."

The program didn't originate from Renfro Valley, or even Kentucky, in the beginning. The first broadcast of the Renfro Valley Barn Dance originated in the Cincinnati Music Hall on Sat-

Performers onstage at the Renfro Valley Barn Dance. Photo courtesy Renfro Valley Entertainment Center.

urday night, October 9, 1937. After the first year, the program moved to Memorial Auditorium in Dayton, Ohio, for another successful year. The cast made personal appearances throughout Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and West Virginia, building the program's reputation and popularity.

Meanwhile, Lair and his backers were building a large barn in the part of Rockcastle County that Lair christened "Renfro Valley." Many in the radio industry were dubious about the prospects of a live radio program—with audience—so far from any metropolitan area. Nonetheless, "The Renfro Valley Barn Dance" debuted from Renfro Valley on WLW radio Saturday, November 4, 1939.

The program was an immediate success. In the days before interstate highways, when poor roads made long distance travel tough, the Renfro Valley Barn Dance drew impressive crowds. On Saturday nights, automobile license plates could be seen from no fewer than seven, and sometimes as many as fifteen, states. License tags from Indiana and Ohio often outnumbered those from Kentucky. People arrived at the barn on horseback and in horse-drawn wagons and buggies.

The Saturday night broadcasts were just part of the show at Renfro Valley. "The response was such that they often went past midnight," says Pete Stamper. "When WHAS radio in Louisville took over the broadcasts [in 1940], there were several radio programs—as many as 12, 14, and 16 a week—daily shows, just on radio. But the performances where people bought tickets were just on Saturday night."

Some of the performers on the Barn Dance went on to greater fame. Lilly Mae Ledford and the Coon Creek Girls were invited to perform at The White House for the King and Queen of England in 1939. In 1940, the musical comedy team of Homer and Jethro debuted on the Barn Dance and soon went on to perform for network broadcasts and recordings. Other performers remained favorites on the Barn Dance, including Slim Miller, Judy Dell, Dwight Butcher, the Mountain Rangers, Jerry Byrd, the Pine Ridge Boys, and Harmonica Bill Russell.

"The Renfro Valley Barn Dance" remained on WHAS until the broadcasts ended in 1959, although the Sunday radio program "The Renfro Valley Gatherin'" is still syndicated to over one hundred stations nationwide. Renfro Valley has maintained the live Barn Dance, and it's going as strong as ever.

When Interstate 75 came through Kentucky, it was originally planned for the other side of Mount Vernon. Staunch Republican John Lair told Kentucky's road commissioner that if the highway were routed to provide access to Renfro Valley, he would change his lifelong practice and vote Democratic. The highway was re-routed (leaving concrete pillars standing in the original path) and Kentucky gained another Democratic voter.

The original barn is still in use. "It's been modernized with heating and cooling and theatre seats, but from outside you can see very little change," Stamper says. "It was well built. It has perfect sound; the acoustics are perfect in it. And there has been very little repair to it in all these years because it was so well built."

Seating 650, the original barn hosts classic country concerts on Friday nights. Saturdays feature comedy and gospel along with the Saturday night Barn Dance, and the "Gatherin'" is held on Sunday mornings. "We're heavy on comedy—always have been," asserts Stamper. "It's an entertainment variety show with mountain and country music as its foundation."

A second barn, seating nearly twice as many as the original barn, was built for the Headliner Concert series, which has recently featured such names as Loretta Lynn, Ray Price, Merle Haggard, Connie Smith, and Don Williams. Various festivals, including the Fiddler's Festival, the Appalachian Harvest Festival, and Christmas in the Valley are also held in the "new" barn.

Visitors can stay in the Renfro Valley Lodge Motel, in a full service R-V park, or in the Hon-

eymoon Cabins. The Historic Lodge Restaurant and Old Joe Clark's Restaurant offer food, and shopping is available in Renfro Village.

Ownership has changed several times since the Barn Dance began in 1939. John Lair died in 1985. Don and Vera Evans have owned Renfro Valley since November 2005. Connie Hunt is the CEO of Renfro Valley; she's worked there for over sixteen years. "We were very fortunate to get [Don and Vera] because they've attended over 1,000 shows and really knew Renfro Valley, its history, its culture. Renfro Valley really is a Kentucky music treasure—they understand that," says Connie Hunt.

Hunt hopes that Renfro Valley will continue to offer what it has offered for over sixty-seven years: "quality, first-class entertainment."

"You can see a headliner concert anywhere, but you can't see what Renfro Valley offers just anywhere," she says.

"I'm often asked what influence Renfro Valley has had on the music industry," Stamper says, "and I'm proud to say 'none.' The important thing is, we haven't let the music industry influence us."

The Carter Fold

In 1974, Janette Carter fulfilled a pledge she made several years before to her father, A. P. Carter. A. P., along with his wife Sara and sister-in-law Maybelle, formed The Original Carter Family, whose recording debut in Bristol in 1927 helped create modern country music. Before he died in 1960, A. P. asked his daughter Janette to help preserve the traditional Appalachian music of the Carter Family and their peers. The result was The Carter Family Fold at the foot of Clinch Mountain in Hiltons, Virginia.

The legacy of the Carter Family has had a worldwide impact—something that A. P.'s granddaughter only realized gradually. "My memories are mostly of him as my granddad," recalls Rita Forrester, a coordinator with East Tennessee State University's College of Medicine and now "head cook and bottle washer" at The Carter Family Fold. "By the time I was born in 1954, The Original Carter Family was not performing. I remember everyday things. I would walk with him a lot; wherever he went, I would walk with him. I have memories of him cooking and just being with us."

A. P. lived with Janette and her family, and music aficionados frequently paid visits to their home. "I grew up thinking that every family in Hiltons had visitors all the time, people that they didn't know who just dropped by," Rita remembers. "But that really wasn't the case; that was unique to our family. People were always seeking out my granddad and seeking out the place where the Carter Family came from."

It wasn't until the 1970s that Rita understood the cross-generational impact of the Carter Family. "A friend of mine pointed out to me an article in *Rolling Stone* magazine about their influence. And that's when it really hit home to me."

Janette began holding Saturday night shows in the building that once housed the grocery store A. P. operated after The Original Carter Family quit performing. The audiences quickly outgrew the one-room structure, and in 1976 Janette asked her brother Joe, a builder, to design a larger venue. The Carter Fold has presented old-time and bluegrass music ever since.

In the beginning, Rita was not involved much with the operation of the Fold; she had her own career and family to keep her busy. In 1979, she helped with the paperwork and grant applications that turned the Fold into a non-profit organization. But Janette handled the day-to-day operation, booking

Dancing and picking at The Carter Fold. Photo courtesy ETSU Photo Lab.

the bands, cooking the chili for the snack bar, making sure the performers had a place to sleep and a good meal, cleaning up after the show. The audiences grew—and changed.

"Initially, when the shows started, it was more local," Rita says. "The people who came were people that we knew. The artists were people that we knew or had met through the years, like the McLain Family. But now that's not true at all. The bulk of our audience is people from a good distance away, and a lot of foreign visitors. Last weekend there were three people who visited from Norway."

As The Carter Fold gained recognition as a regional and national treasure, Janette hoped that the family would remain involved after she was gone. The Fold had a board of directors that would continue Janette's original mission, but Janette desired to have a Carter descendant at the helm. "In her own quiet, sweet way, she nudged us in that direction, to take over and do the things that needed to be done," recalls Rita.

Joe Carter, whose barnyard impressions were a regular feature on Saturday nights, died in March 2005. Janette's oldest son Donald Jett died in July 2005. A few weeks later, Janette received the Bess Lomax Hawes Award from the National Endowment for the Humanities in honor of her lifelong efforts in the preservation and performance of Appalachian music. Janette was hospitalized for a few weeks in the fall of 2005 but was able to return to the Fold for several shows before a Christmas Day fall sent her back to the hospital. Janette Carter died on January 22, 2006.

Rita, who serves on the Fold's board of directors, has no official title. "When someone asks, I ask them which title they want—groundskeeper or toilet scrubber or chief cook-and-bottle-washer. I do a lot of things: I run the kitchen, I do all the paperwork, I do the grants, I book the bands."

The Carter Family Fold has seen some improvements in recent years. Thanks to grants from four different agencies, the building now boasts a new roof, garage-door-type side walls that roll up for ventilation, new seats, a new concrete floor, improved restrooms and septic system, a refurbished tuning room, improvements in the kitchen, and new electric and sprinkler systems.

With all the improvements, though, The Carter Fold retains its original character. The shows feature acoustic old-time and bluegrass music, with no electric instruments. It's a family atmosphere; no alcohol is served or permitted. Dancing, on the other hand, is encouraged, and every Saturday night the floor in front of the stage is packed with dancers. Food is available, as are records and souvenirs, and The Carter Museum is housed in the former grocery store building next to the Fold. Some of A. P. Carter's relatives contributed the cabin where A. P. was born. It was moved from its original, inaccessible location to the Fold and was painstakingly restored.

Old-time music can co-exist with modern technology, however. The Original Carter Family were pioneers in the fledgling record industry and achieved fame through the brand-new medium of radio. The Carter Family Fold hopes to continue that juxtaposition of old and new. Plans are underway to provide streaming audio of the Saturday night shows on the Fold's website, sharing the legacy of The Original Carter Family and Appalachian music with an eager worldwide audience.

The Down Home

In the late 1960s and early '70s, there were two good places to play folk music near the East Tennessee State University campus, recalls singer/songwriter/actor/club owner Ed Snodderly. "There was a coffeehouse at the Wesley Foundation called The Fatted Calf. Some neighborhood buddies and I were just beginning to play, and we went over and got ourselves a gig. It was the only place to play music that was different, that wasn't sort of a 'Holiday Inn-type' gig. That led to another job at a barbecue joint called The Red Pig. I ended up playing four nights a week, and the place was packed every night. During the summer of '73, I started hearing a har-

monica coming from the audience."

The mystery harmonica player was Joe "Tank" Leach, a Vietnam veteran and music enthusiast who began playing regularly with Snodderly and his group. The Red Pig was noisy, and, Ed recalls, "People were in there just getting loaded. It was fun, but it wasn't that much fun for the performer." Tank and Ed began discussing the need for a club where the music was the priority—"a place where you can go and it's quiet, which is what The Fatted Calf was," says Ed.

By 1976, Tank and Ed were ready to begin. Even before securing a location, they were booking their opening act. "We went to the Wesley Foundation to use their phone and called The Red Clay Ramblers," remembers Ed. "We got a date. Tommy [Thompson, of the Ramblers] said, 'We can be there June 18.' Then we went looking for a place."

After exploring several locations, Tank found the building on the corner of Watauga and Main in Johnson City in March 1976. The landlord was willing to take a percentage of the receipts for rent. Tank Leach became a club owner and settled on the name "Down Home."

Getting the building ready for a club was the next hurdle, and a number of people contributed their skills. "We learned from some people living on the street how to start an angle floor. I knew a guy who drank a lot of kerosene, and he got us started," Ed laughs. Jo Carson of The Road Company theatre troupe lived next door. She and fellow Road Company performer Bob Leonard were enthusiastic early supporters.

When The Red Clay Ramblers arrived to open The Down Home, "They just looked inside and shook their heads," according to Ed. "There was still sawdust on the floor. But there were plenty of people to help, and we got it cleaned up for that night." The Down Home opened to a full house, and, as Ed puts it, "We went over gangbusters."

In the early 1980s, Tank faced some financial problems, and The Down Home was eventually padlocked. Prospects for the future of The Down Home looked bleak when Phil Leonard, then program director of public radio station WETS-FM in Johnson City, stepped in. Leonard was then producing a series of programs recorded at The Down Home for national distribution, and he took over the club, first with another partner and finally with Ed Snodderly and Danny Julian, who was also involved with the club from the beginning.

Leonard, Snodderly, and Julian established a solid financial footing for The Down Home, and they purchased the building at 300 West Main Street. By the year 2000, Leonard had left The Down Home, but Snodderly and Julian were determined to continue the mission of the club.

"This world is really crazy right now," says Ed. "So The Down Home, to me, just keeps something steady inside us, to help us remember what we know is the truth inside. That's what The Down Home is to me." ❖

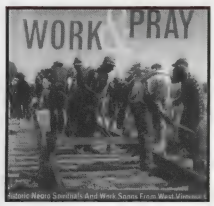
Wayne Winkler is manager of public radio station WETS-FM in Johnson City, Tennessee, and music editor of *Now & Then*.

Raymond McLain, director of the Bluegrass program at ETSU, onstage at The Down Home with one of the program's twelve bands. Photo courtesy ETSU Photo Lab.

The Invisible Man
(Full Light Records)
Darrell Scott

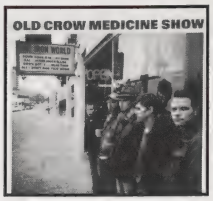
Darrell Scott is a very successful songwriter, having composed hits for more than sixty artists, including Patty Loveless ("You'll Never Leave Harlan Alive"), The Dixie Chicks ("Long Time Gone"), Garth Brooks ("When There's No One Around"), Tim McGraw ("Old Town New"), and many others. The success of his songs for Nashville hitmakers gives him the freedom to pursue the type of country music not heard on country radio. Scott's music combines imaginative melodies with mostly acoustic instrumentation and intelligent and often humorous lyrics. The result on his sixth release, *The Invisible Man*, is intense. The songs range from the quiet "Looking Glass" to a full-blown arrangement of "There's a Stone Around My Belly." Scott also confronts today's world and political situation, with songs like "Goodle USA" and "I'm Nobody." Mortality is a recurring theme in this disc, but Scott's views on war and death are transformed into something beautiful, particularly in the closing track, "In My Final Hour." Most of *The Invisible Man* was recorded in Scott's home studio with veteran musicians such as Tim O'Brien, Danny Thompson, Kenny Malone, and Richard Bennett. This is a brilliant work from one of America's most important artists. ❖

Work and Pray: Historic Negro Spirituals and Work Songs from West Virginia
(WVU Press Sound Archive)
Various Artists



Southern West Virginia was the last area in the eastern United States to be opened and populated. The coal boom of the late nineteenth century brought thousands of African Americans into the region seeking employment. From 1949 to 1953, Dr. Cortez D. Reece, a professor at Bluefield State College, traveled to old coal camps and railroad towns to collect the music heard on this disc. Performers include Clarence Harmon, a student at Bluefield who had worked on the railroad, retired railroader Albert McCoy, teacher and social activist Memphis Tennessee Garrison, and Dr. P. R. Higginbotham, women's physician at Bluefield State College. Some of the performers were former railroad laborers; others were individuals who had been in contact with workers and had learned the songs. Laboring songs are interspersed with religious tunes, and several variations of "Lining Track," a popular work song, are included. The accompanying booklet details the life and career of Dr. Reece and includes brief sketches of the performers. The performances are not polished nor particularly well-recorded, but they possess an authenticity that supersedes any technical considerations. ❖

Big Iron World
(Netwerk America)
Old Crow Medicine Show



As their website proclaims, "Old Crow is not the only band playing pre-World War II blues, fiddle tunes, rags, hollers, hokum and jug band music, but they do so with a brazenness born of growing up around AC/DC, Nirvana and Public Enemy." Their story has a show-business fairy-tale quality: Five young men from four different states meet in New York and begin traveling the country, gypsy-style, performing for food and shelter while learning their instruments. After settling in the mountains of western North Carolina, they performed in front of a pharmacy in Boone. A woman asked if they'd be there for awhile; she wanted to bring her father to hear them. Dad turned out to be the legendary Doc Watson, who invited them to play at MerleFest. The rest, as they say, is history. *Big Iron World* is Old Crow's fourth CD (not counting *Down Home Girl*, an EP featuring some of the songs on *Big Iron World*). Songs range from an R&B reading of Leiber and Stoller's "Down Home Girl" to a rollicking jug band rendition of "Cocaine Habit." Woody Guthrie's "Union Maid" receives a joyous treatment. Original songs like "God's Got It," "James River Blues," "New Virginia Creeper," and "Bobcat Tracks" blend perfectly with traditional material for an outstanding representation of this unique band. ❖

SOUPED UP BLUEGRASS AT CIDERVILLE

By FRED SAUCEMAN

Faye West props her doghouse bass fiddle in the corner at the Ciderville Music Store on Wednesdays and starts cutting up vegetables—celery, onions, and potatoes. The next morning, she'll dice some tomatoes, add some butterbeans and mixed vegetables, sprinkle in some parsley, oregano, basil, and dried red pepper, drop in some bouillon cubes, a little bit of butter, a scattering of sugar, some salt, and simmer it all down, to make two big pots of vermilion vegetable soup that bring the bluegrass musicians out of the hills and hollows.

"I just come up with a combination that tasted good, that I liked," she said, "and I figured if I liked it, everybody else would, too."

At lunchtime every Thursday, Faye and her brother David serve soup free of charge to anyone who walks in the door. They'll set a few two-liter soft drink bottles on the tables in the backroom kitchen, and Cecil Thomas will drive up from Lenoir City with his guitar in one hand and a pan of cornbread in the other. Pillars of saltines are unwrapped and stacked on the tables for the taking. No money ever changes hands.

"I've took the store out of the yellow pages, I've cut the newspaper ads," says David, who is one of the world's leading sellers of Martin guitars. "This is doing more for me than I ever got off of billboards or anything. It's just word of mouth, and there's probably going to be a hundred people here today."

Sister Faye sports an orange metal button that reads, "Our prices are like a broken set of drums. You can't beat 'em!"

David patterns his promotional tactics after longtime grocer and radio and television personality Cas Walker, whom he credits for the "invention" of the footlong hot dog. He played banjo for Walker's broadcasts and owns the original television backdrop painted in 1958 by O. D. Abston and caught in black-and-white television camera shots of Dolly Parton, Don Gibson, and the Osborne Brothers. It now frames the stage in a music hall beside the store, where Grand Ole Opry-style performances are held every Saturday night.

Photos by Fred Sauceman.

David recollects clearly Walker's wild stratagem of throwing live chickens off the roofs of his stores. When Walker was nearing ninety, David suggested that he reconsider climbing on top of store roofs.

"We had this guy come out to Ciderville with one of these big cranes to lift us up on a big platform, and we threw paper, fold-out turkeys to the customers down below. People would catch them and the turkeys would have a note on them saying you'd won a frozen turkey or guitar strings or a Cas Walker cap. Everybody won, every turkey had a prize on it.

"They called me from the Knoxville Humane Society and said that was cruelty to animals, and I said, 'Cruelty to animals? What are you gonna cook for Thanksgiving? How much worse can you get than to kill one, pluck it, cut it open, and bake it and then eat it?'"

Jam sessions break out all over the Ciderville Music Store, a starred and striped structure colored up like a fireworks stand, on the Clinton Highway, about a mile inside the Anderson County line. Ten musicians mesh on a gospel tune, "He Had to Reach Way Down for Me," and in the next room, David West imitates chickens clucking on his banjo.

The West family used to press apples into cider on the spot where the music store is now. Claude West started selling light groceries there in 1966. He and his children made the blocks for the building themselves.

Now the Wests sell guitars priced from a few hundred dollars to $50,000. "We sold Willie Nelson's family about ten just recently," says David.

Photographs of early country music personalities, mostly friends of the West family, are pinned to the walls all over the building. In the kitchen, there's a poster promoting Bonnie Lou and Buster, stars of "The Jim Walter Jubilee," who gave David his start. He went to work for Cas Walker in 1976 and stayed until Walker's television show went off the air in 1984.

"It was a good bunch of people to work for. Nobody ever disagreed. Nobody tried to outpick nobody. And Cas loved banjo picking, so if you played the banjo, you'd automatically get a job with Cas.

"I remember one time, we had three television stations here in Knoxville, and at seven in the morning, he bought time on all three and put on a show sponsored by Cas Walker. He'd say, 'If you don't like what you're looking at, turn your channel,' and when you turned it, there's Cas Walker again. He'd say it on every one of them. He had it nailed down, didn't he?"

Just as they did in the days of live television in East Tennessee, the banjo breakdowns, mandolin riffs, and guitar runs ring out from noon to six o'clock every Thursday at the Ciderville Music Store, but the soup pot's usually dry and the cornbread's just crumbs by one. ❖

Ciderville Music Store
2836 Clinton Highway
Powell, Tennessee
865-945-3595

Fred Sauceman, editor of *Now & Then*, is the author of *The Place Setting: Timeless Tastes of the Mountain South, from Bright Hope to Frog Level*, published by Mercer University Press.

COOTER STEW: A SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN FAMILY TRADITION

By CARMEN BROOKS

Cooter Stew is a delicious alternative to the typical everyday meal. Catching, cleaning, and cooking the turtle require massive amounts of time, but every spoonful of stew is worth the hours and effort spent in preparation.

Snapping turtle, also called "cooter" in some sections of Appalachia, is a great delicacy in the southern United States. Turtle meat is both delicate and intense—old timers in Appalachia insist that there are seven distinct flavors of meat within the turtle. Many regions of the South have a turtle recipe, including the gourmet turtle soup served in the restaurants of New Orleans. The Appalachian Mountain turtle recipes of Tennessee and North Carolina result in a hearty stew not found in the local restaurants. My family's Cooter Stew recipe has been handed down for generations, penned by my great-grandmother in the early 1900s. The Cooter Stew recipes of Appalachia are very diverse; however, the formulas all have one thing in common—fresh turtle meat. If you don't catch your own turtle and clean it yourself, you haven't really experienced the Appalachian family tradition that is Cooter Stew.

Catching a Turtle

Snapping turtles are generally used in Appalachian recipes due to the animal's abundance. Snappers are also easier to catch and kill than most turtles because of their large size and demeanor—they aren't afraid of people.

Illustration by Sara Peters.

Unfortunately, this turtle meat can't be found in the frozen or fresh meat cases of the local grocery stores. However, many fishermen can tell you where to find snapping turtles in local ponds and streams. My family always finds good-sized snapping turtles in an area of the Cherokee National Forest called Paint Creek, between Greeneville, Tennessee, and Hot Springs, North Carolina.

Spring is the best time of year to catch a snapper, though they can be caught year round. Snappers are slower to "snap" at the fingers of fishermen due to the lingering cold weather of spring, but eager for the bait on the line and out in abundance since it's the beginning of mating season. Whenever you go, make sure you have a current fishing license in hand, easily obtainable at any small convenience store that sells fish bait.

My family has been getting together to catch turtles, clean them, and cook our delicious Cooter Stew for decades.

The snapping turtle is easy to identify. The turtle's head is large, with strong jaws. The top shell is brown, black, olive, or tan. The under shell, or belly, is usually yellow or cream, with dark markings. The turtle's skin is brown, black, gray, or tan, and the legs are thick and heavily scaled with webbed feet and long claws. Males are larger than females, but both are equally tasty.

The snapping turtle prefers shallow ponds and streams. During the day it burrows in the mud and comes out at night to find food. The key to catching a snapping turtle, while remaining unscathed (they will bite you), is to tie a "float line" or "trot line" across a pond or stream and leave it overnight.

Killing and Cleaning the Turtle

It's a good idea to keep the newly caught snapper in a five-gallon tub of clean water (with a lid) for several days before the kill. Change the water as needed to keep it clear. This process, commonly called the "first wash," will help rid the turtle's insides of mud.

Killing and cleaning a snapping turtle can be a daunting task for a first-timer. To kill the turtle, place a stout stick in front of its snout; the snapper will bite onto it and hang on. Pull the turtle's neck out as far as possible and, using a heavy knife or ax, chop off the turtle's head as close to the head as possible (do not waste the good meat in the neck). Be careful—the head can and will still bite after it's removed from the body, and the body will still crawl after the head is removed. When the body stops trying to get away, hang the turtle by the tail and let it bleed out into a bucket for several hours.

The turtle is now ready to clean. Using a very sharp knife or a skill saw:

1. Cut around the edge of the bottom shell, cutting through the joint between the top and bottom shell on each side
2. Lift off the bottom shell (like a lid)
3. Remove the entrails—discard
4. Chop off the claws—discard
5. Slice the legs, neck, and tail loose from the top shell
6. Skin the legs, neck, and tail

The next step is to pour boiling water on the inside of the top shell. The hot water will loosen the meat in the shell, which is called the "back straps." This meat can now be easily removed using a sharp knife. The four legs and tail are the dark meat; the neck and back straps are the white meat. Do not de-bone the meat. The bone marrow adds flavor to the stew—the bones will be taken out later.

The Robinette Family Cooter Stew Recipe

My family has been getting together to catch turtles, clean them, and cook our delicious Cooter Stew for decades. The recipe that my father uses has been in our family for

years. We have no idea who created the original formula.

Ingredients:

- *4-6 pounds turtle meat**
- *1 large onion, chopped*
- *4 potatoes, cubed*
- *4 carrots, chopped*
- *10 ounces cream*

Seasoning Mix:

- *2 teaspoons white pepper*
- *2 teaspoons black pepper*
- *1 teaspoon red pepper*
- *½ teaspoon celery salt*
- *1 tablespoon salt*

**A twelve-to-sixteen-pound snapping turtle will yield around four to six pounds of meat, a good amount for eight to twelve servings of Cooter Stew.*

Put the meat (bone-in) in a two-gallon pot and fill with water. Bring to a full boil for fifteen to twenty minutes. Pour this water off and discard. This boil is called the "second wash"—it boils any mud and impurities off the meat.

Refill the two-gallon pot with one and a half gallons of water. Place the turtle meat, onion, and seasoning mix in the pot. Let this mixture slow boil, or simmer, for five or six hours. The meat will break apart and fall off of the bone during this slow boil. Remove the bones and discard. In the last twenty minutes, add the cubed potatoes, chopped carrots, and cream. The cream and vegetables will help to thicken up the mixture. The stew will take on the appearance of clam chowder.

Cooter Stew is a delicious, hearty meal for the entire family. If you have small, clean turtle shells, they can be used as decorative bowls for the stew. To complete the feast, serve with crackers, buttered toast, or cornbread. ❖

Carmen Brooks is an English major at East Tennessee State University. Her Cooter Stew story and recipe were submitted as a project for the university's Foodways of Appalachia course.

SHELVED IN MASON JARS AND PEPSI BOTTLES:

TOMATO KETCHUP FROM AN EAST TENNESSEE FARM

By PATRICIA STAFFORD

Belle Stockton was not unlike her friends and neighbors in the Philadelphia community of rural East Tennessee. She raised a garden, canned, and sewed most of the family's clothes. She was typical in most every way, with a couple of exceptions: She was a vegetarian and she made ketchup.

For as long as I or my three siblings can remember, my mother made homemade ketchup. The containers changed over the years. My older brothers and sisters remember ketchup in Mason jars, but for me, Mom's ketchup was always stored in recycled Pepsi bottles.

Ketchup making was a long and fairly labor-intensive process. As a preschooler I was intrigued by the tools and method. The spices my mother used were wrapped and tied in a muslin bundle and dropped into the cooking tomatoes at just the right time. The hand grinder used to crush the cooked tomato mixture into a fine pulp was like nothing else we used on the farm. Only a bit of tomato skin and a few seeds remained in the bottom when we finished. But, best of all, was the bottle capper. It was heavy, cast iron, and red. The handle turned round and round until the rod holding the new bottle cap touched the rim of the bottle, pressure was applied to the handle, and a successful "capping" occurred when you saw the perfect little circle in the center of the bottle cap.

In a typical year my mother made 200 or more bottles. They lined the shelves of the family cellar and most were gone by the next summer. Her ketchup bore only a faint resemblance to the ketchup we buy in today's grocery stores. It was something between a tomato sauce and what we now know as ketchup. Which, I rationalize, is why we ate it on everything. We ate it on green beans, mashed potatoes, even corn. When the grocery version finally, and sadly, came into our lives, "ketchup" no longer tasted good on all those wonderful, homegrown vegetables.

Belle Stockton. Photo courtesy Patricia Stafford.

Tomato Ketchup

1 peck tomatoes
3 sweet red peppers
1 pod hot red pepper
4 tablespoons salt
2 cups sugar
1 tablespoon celery seed
2 teaspoons mustard seed
1 tablespoon whole allspice
2 sticks cinnamon
3 cups apple cider vinegar

Wash and chop tomatoes and peppers. Simmer until soft. Press through a fine sieve. Cook rapidly until reduced to about one half. Add salt and sugar, then add spices tied up in a muslin bundle. Boil until thick. Add vinegar about 5 minutes before removing from heat. Stir well. Pour into hot Ball jars and seal at once. ❖

Patricia Stafford is director of East Tennessee State University's campus in Kingsport, Tennessee.

July 1, 1914

By EMILY BOOTH MASTERS

"This certifies
that Minta Carter
is a person
of good moral
character
who does not use
intoxicants,
opiates,
or cigarettes,
and having passed
the examination
required by law
is entitled
to teach in the
Elementary Schools
of Unicoi County,
Tennessee."

Great Aunt Mint died
and Daddy found
her certificate in
an old trunk,
buried under
carefully cut
quilt pieces.

Daddy reckoned
there was
no time to finish
a quilt
while educating
the youth of
Erwin, Tennessee.

Minta taught them
how to read,
one room full
of the future.
The special ones
she gave much
attention.

One in particular
had a talent
for the written word.
She saw this
and tried
to help.
Too much
to overcome.

Now he sits
in his garden
whittling and spitting,
and my Aunt Mint
turns over
in her grave.

The state flag of Tennessee was unfurled for the first time at East Tennessee State Normal School's dedication in 1911. My great-great aunt Araminta Alice Carter graduated from the Normal School on July 1, 1914. The students educated there formed the core of teachers for the entire region. My aunt went on to start the free lunch program in Unicoi County.

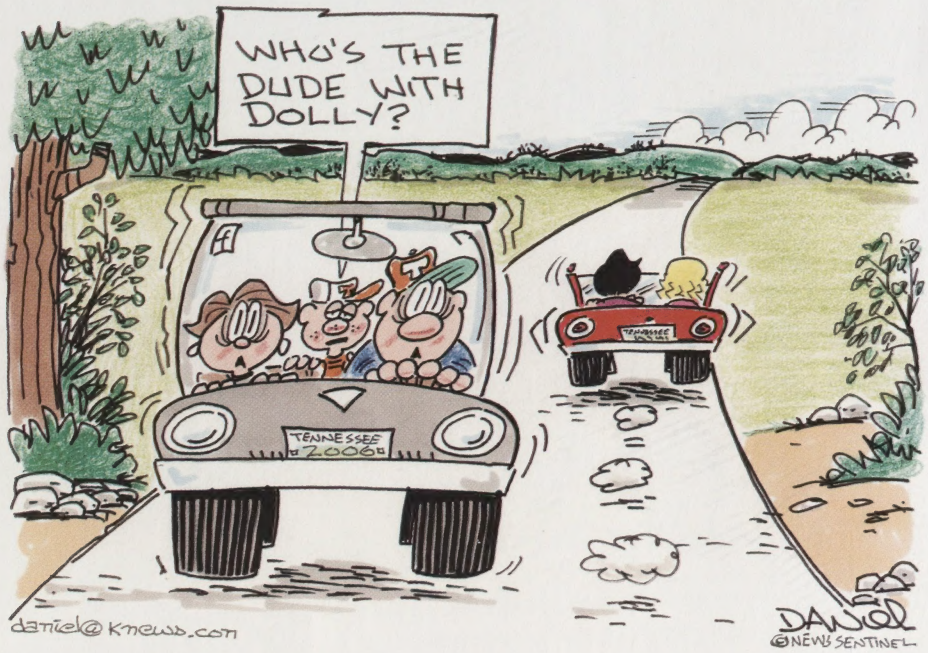
The certificate Minta (as her friends and family referred to her) received on that day in 1914 served as inspiration (and the first stanza) for this poem.

Emily Booth Masters received a bachelor of arts in English from Appalachian State University and a master of arts in English from East Tennessee State University. She currently works as director of the Tennessee Young Writers Programs for Humanities Tennessee in Nashville. She spends a week each summer helping teenage writers work on their craft and the rest of the year creating literary and cultural programs for Tennessee's young people.

I'VE HEARD OF THAT

Dr. Roberta Herrin, director of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University, located this shop on Causewayside Street in Edinburgh, Scotland, while looking for a restaurant. "The name immediately caught my eye," she said, "and I was reminded of the many layers of meaning implied by the phrase 'now and then.' Unfortunately, the shop was closed every time I passed it—I never got to browse through the interior or its contents. A magazine, unlike a shop, is never closed."

Photo courtesy Paul Tschetter.



Charles Daniel created this cartoon in response to an advertising campaign promoting tourism in Tennessee and featuring Elvis Presley and Dolly Parton, two "institutions" both born in Appalachia.

Cartoon courtesy Charles Daniel, Knoxville News-Sentinel.

Special thanks to Jigsha Desai, Knoxville News-Sentinel.

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